



Taiwan history takes the stage

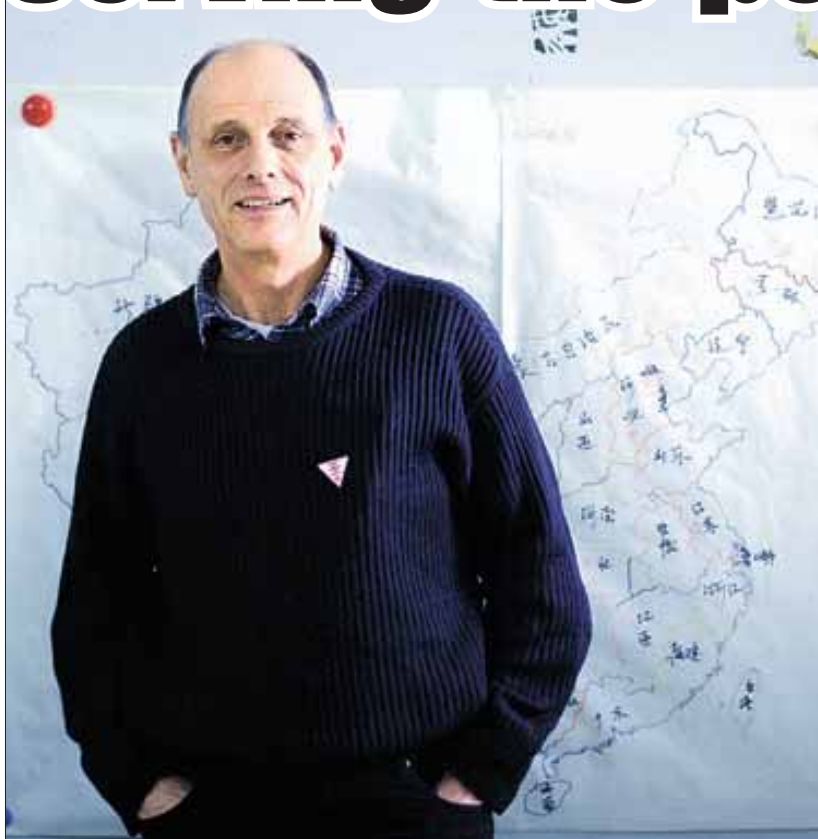
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Indie comics with creativity

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Serving the people



Born in Beijing and educated in China in the 1960s, Michael Crook is familiar with cooperatives – now a relic of a bygone age.

But as vice chairman of the 70-year-old International Committee for the Promotion of Chinese Industrial Cooperatives, Crook sees in them an efficiency that may help both urban and rural people to improve their lives.

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FREE ENTRY FREE BREAKFAST FREE GIFTS PRIZES BEST SCREENS

Total ban on smoking being tested in 7 cities

By Han Manman

Health advocates and officials are pushing to enforce a total smoking ban in seven major cities, the largest ban on tobacco worldwide. Experts said it was unclear how effective the move would be.

Organized by China's Center for Disease Control and Prevention agency (CCDC), it seeks to tighten smoking regulations, close loopholes and enforce the neglected but existing ban on indoor smoking in public places.

Cities targeted include commercial centers such as Tianjin, Chongqing and Qingdao.

"Our aim is to make 100 percent of the indoor environment at public locations and workplaces smoke-free in these seven cities," Wang Yu, director of the CCDC, said.

The project will be scaled up to protect the whole nation from indoor smoking, he said.

Smoking is a huge business with 2 trillion cigarettes sold in China every year. The country is home to a quarter of the world's 1.3 billion smokers: 60 percent

of Chinese men and 3 percent of women use tobacco.

The new move would help save millions of lives by lowering tobacco consumption and reducing the effects of secondhand smoke, said Xie Zhiyong, a professor at the China University of Political Science and Law in Beijing.

However, he said it is unclear about how effective it would be.

While China has banned smoking in some public places during the last two years, the restrictions have sometimes not been enforced and local government tends to rely on the income from cigarette sales.

"A ban on smoking in public places can start with legislation, but getting the local government to implement it is the challenge," said Xie.

He said there is a conflict of interests because many local governments rely on tax revenues from the tobacco industry, and the tobacco industry itself is state-owned.

Weighing the benefits and risks of tobacco, he said the country



While the government has banned smoking in some public places, enforcement has been lackluster.

CFP Photo

should take bolder steps in smoking and tobacco control.

A rural county in Hubei Province last year sparked a public outcry after pushing 230,000 packs of local cigarettes on residents to boost tax revenue. The move was called off after harsh criticism.

The World Health Organization

(WHO) in China said it was optimistic about the new move.

There are signs the public is eager for stronger limits on the tobacco industry, said Sarah England, the WHO's Tobacco-Free Initiative officer in China. "I think we're seeing some change, but it's too soon to say for sure."

Old subway lines to have platform doors in 4 years



All subway platforms will be refitted with doors like those found on the new lines within four years.

CFP Photo

By Chu Meng

The city's subway platforms will be refitted with doors to improve safety and security and all cars without air conditioning will be decommissioned, the Beijing Subway Operation Company and Beijing Infrastructure Investment Company said Wednesday.

The project is a final step to bring the old subway lines up to the standard set by the city's new lines. It will also shorten the departure intervals on Lines 1, 4 and 5 to a maximum of 2 minutes.

"The Beijing subway will be getting new trains with new tech-

nology and better signal and electric systems to improve the existing lines before we put the new lines into use," Jia Peng, a spokesman for the subway company, said.

The city's subway network is the oldest and busiest on the mainland. It has received enormous extensions to meet the city's pressing mass transit needs. Beijing has the country's longest subway after Shanghai and serves 5 million passengers per day.

"But in a city whose population and transit needs are increasing rapidly, even the opening of Line 4 won't put a dent in

demand," Jia said.

Data from the Beijing Rail Traffic Control Center shows that the Line 1 bears the heaviest pressure and serves 1.2 million passengers per day, making it the busiest subway line in the world. The passenger load rates at Sihui, Sihui East and Guomao have exceeded 100 percent, 130 percent and 110 percent respectively.

The city plans to double its network's size by 2012, using the government's 4 trillion yuan stimulus package to complete nine new subway lines. A total of 19 are planned for 2015.

When the Beijing Subway opened on October 1, 1969, only two short lines served the growing capital. With 17.4 million people in the metro area, the city government is racing to catch up to years of subway neglect.

For comparison, New York City has 26 subway lines for its 8.2 million people; Beijing has seven.

"The government projects there will be 21.4 million people living in Beijing in 2020. The demand for rapid transit is at a level that has never existed before as Beijing's boulevards become polluted and overcrowded with cars and buses," Jia said.

Online games to warn young players

By Liang Meilan

More than 30 local online game operators started adding age notifications to their products to inform parents and players of the game's appropriate age group.

The move was a response to the Beijing Animation and Games Alliance, which proposed last week that the city's online games industry should exercise self-discipline while a formal game rating system is prepared.

"Online operators should add notices to their games as a reference for players and parents of young players," according to Article IV of the proposal.

As of Wednesday, 32 online game operators have altered their software. New versions of the game with an age reminder are expected to be available by the end of the month, according to an announcement on the game alliance's website.

"Before the official rating system is finalized, operators should self-regulate and design games for all players or introduce restrictive measures to protect the young," Liu Chungang, general secretary of the alliance, said.

"When playing a game with an age requirement, the player should be required to input his or her ID number. The game will pop up a message indicating whether or not the game is suitable for the player's age group," Liu said.

"Online game operators participating should rate their games' content based on legal and industrial standards and divide games into two groups: one for players under 18 and one for adults," Liu said.

There were 217 million online gamers last June, according to China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC).

The newly released white paper on online games shows game revenue in China hit 25.8 billion yuan last year, up 40 percent from the previous year. There were 115 massively multiplayer online RPGs put into operation last year, up from 28 in 2008.

"This boom has exposed the tremendously negative impact games can have on young ones. Competition among the profit-driven game operators has led to games thriving on lewd, pornographic or violent content. Self-regulation is urgently needed in the industry, and this proposal acts as a guideline," Chen said.

Wei Jianghui, a 24-year-old player in Beijing, was doubtful about how effective such measures would be. "What if teenagers steal their parents' ID cards to play 'adult only' games?" he said.

Liu Chungang said the reminder is not intended to ban teens from playing adult games. "It is an attempt by the industry to provide a better online gaming environment."

Earlier this month, the Ministry of Culture appointed two academic institutions to research into rating standards for online games. The institutions' proposed ratings are "12+," "18+" and "Everyone."

Bullet to the head ends brawl, officer suspended

By Li Zhixin

A police officer is being investigated for killing two men during a village feud in Guizhou Province.

Guo Yonghua, 44, and his cousin, Guo Yongzhi, 36, of Anshun City, were shot dead last Tuesday by the deputy chief of a local police station, Zhang Lei, who came to break up a fight between the victims and two neighbors in a village, said Ran Taiyou, deputy chief of Anshun Municipal Public Security Bureau, at a press conference Monday.

Local police said the men were drunk during their confrontation. Blood tests showed concentrations of 200 milligrams of alcohol per 100-milliliters of blood, surpassing the standard of 80 milligrams per 100-milliliters of blood. They also said gunshots were fired during the struggle and Guo Yongzhi tried to grab Zhang's gun.

Zhang reportedly fired two warning shots into the air before shooting the cousins, each of whom he said he shot only once. An

autopsy found Guo Yongzhi was shot once in the leg and once in the head before he died, contrary to Zhang's statement.

Police are still investigating whether the shot to the head was unnecessary. If found excessive, Zhang could face the charge of murder.

"Restrictions on police gun use would make Zhang a murder suspect if he shot and killed the victims after disabling them," said Xu Jianguo, a lawyer representing the victims' family.

According to the law on police firearm use, police can only open fire on suspects who ignore warnings, attempt to seize a police firearm or who attempt bodily harm on an officer.

Zhang was authorized to carry his gun only a month before the incident.

A government spokesman said Zhang's lack of experience caused the January 12 tragedy. Since March 2008, Zhang had served as the deputy chief.

The local government reached an agreement to compensate the victims' families, said Wu Xin, head of the Bogong township government. The government will offer each family a one-time payment of 350,000 yuan.

"What happened here is a police officer who vowed to protect the rights of taxpayers shot taxpayers dead and used taxpayer's money to make the case go away," the lawyer said.

"The officer is now being watched. A team was sent by the Ministry of Public Security to investigate the incident," Wu Baocheng, a government official, said. "The city will hold a press conference to announce the group's findings."

Last February, the country was shocked by another case of police violence. A drunken off-duty policeman in Yunnan Province put three bullets in a man during a brawl. The officer received a suspended death sentence last month.



Accounts used to send messages deemed "pornographic" are being blocked by China mobile and China Unicom.

CFP Photo

College grad collects as top porn reporter

By Zhang Dongya

University graduate Zhang Xin (pseudonym) was paid a 10,000 yuan bounty for reporting 32 pornographic websites to the Office of the National Campaign on Anti-prostitution and Anti-delinquency, the *People's Daily Online* reported last week.

The office, affiliated to the General Administration of Press and Publication, held the award ceremony on January 8 for Zhang and other whistleblowers.

The rewards were disbursed following a law passed last December, which offers a bounty for reports of obscene or delinquent information found on cell phones and the Internet. Bounties range from 1,000 to 10,000 yuan depending on the type of porn sites or online sex sellers.

Zhang, from Shanxi Province, received the top reward of 10,000 yuan. Zhang faxed the office last December to report how the 32 websites he listed had made him and his classmates suffer.

The *People's Daily Online* provided an excerpt of the letter: "After I went to college, I found there was even more porn. Advances in technology and wealth only made things worse. College students habitually visit porn sites and talk about sex like it is a trend. But the worst part was how it affected our lives. Six of my eight roommates have had sex. Two forced their girlfriends to have an abortion, and another two went to shady places for 'special services.'"

Zhang said he never expected such a large reward when he was invited to the ceremony. He took leave from his company in Jiangxi Province to attend the ceremony in Beijing.

The office awarded other whistleblowers 1,000 to 2,000 yuan.

Spokesman Huang Xiaoxin said the campaign office received 60,000 reported sites one month after releasing the regulations. They disbursed 224,000 yuan to 200 whistleblowers, the *Beijing Daily Messenger* reported.

Since then, the Ministry of Public Security has tightened related policies. China Mobile Shanghai Company said Monday it was starting to filter messages and photos for "pornographic" content. Any messages including any of 13 "degrading" standards that refer directly or indirectly to sexual behavior or organs would be blocked.

Some China Mobile had their accounts disconnected for passing contents that triggered the filter. To resume service, the account holder was required to take his or her identity card to the local public security bureau with a letter promising not to send similar messages in the future.

China Mobile and China Unicom's Beijing companies said they will begin blocking similar messages.

Wedding vow list to be available on registration



Many hope wedding vows will remind impulsive young Chinese couples to treat marriage seriously.

CFP Photo

By Han Manman

Wedding vows have always been a "must" at Christian weddings, but the government is now promoting vows at all weddings to remind young lovers about the responsibilities and obligations of marriage.

Earlier this month, the Ministry of Civil Affairs issued four versions of recommended wedding vows for civil ceremonies.

The vows are an optional choice for marriage registrants, the ministry said.

An employee at the Marriage Registration Office in Haidian District surnamed Li said the office has not started to offer the vows, though she said several couples had inquired about them.

The new vows all contain the words "tolerate, understand and share joys and sorrows" and other phrases like "good union for a hundred years" and "together till we are both gray."

Some marriage experts said the new move is to remind impulsive young couples to treat marriage seriously as divorce rates climb.

According to Sina.com's survey, 70 per-

cent among of 1,000 respondents supported the vows: 50 percent thought the fourth vow was worded best.

The fourth vow closely resembled a Christian wedding vow: "We choose to become husband and wife. From this day forth, we will share the burdens of duty and responsibility that marriage has placed upon us - honoring our parents, instructing our children, loving and respecting each other, understanding and forgiving each other, helping each other through hard times and loving each other for life."

"Reading this version online nearly made me cry. I'll break down if I read a vow like that before the national flag when I get registered," said Chen Jing, a groom-to-be.

"I will absolutely choose to read a wedding vow when I get registered. Marriage is a holy and serious thing. The vow is not a formality, but a personal commitment," Chen said, adding, "If one day in the future I start thinking about divorce, that promise will weigh heavily."

While many locals are waiting for the changes to hit the marriage registration offices, some said they were not interested.

"Wedding vows are a Western tradition. They believe in God and Jesus and they vow to them. We cannot copy that," said Wang Feng, a 32-year-old engineer.

He said China has its own traditions to follow and it does not need to copy the Christian ceremony.

"I will not take a vow because my family and friends are not around, so it doesn't mean anything," Wang said.

"I will choose traditional bowing at my wedding instead of a vow. That behavior is vow enough for my future wife," he said.

The newlyweds bow three times during a traditional Chinese wedding. First to heaven and earth; second to their parents and third to each other.

Wang said pre-marital guidance or counseling may be useful than vows so that people who are ignorant of the responsibilities of marriage can get expert instruction.

Bodyguard business back after hard years

By Zhao Hongyi

Guests scramble out of a hotel in the eastern suburbs to the roaring of an alarm. Hotel management leads out the staff and guests to form lines outside for the fire drill.

Suddenly, a strong man jumps out of a private Mercedes to pounce on one of the wealthier guests and take him away.

These emergency exercises offer a chance for security experts like Liu Yi to stay sharp. Like many ex-military men, Liu is a bodyguard. His business is booming in Beijing, and across the country, thanks to a new National Security Service Law that took effect this year to legitimize their industry.

Serve and protect

"You have to live prepared if you want to work in this business," Liu Yi says.

Liu works for Yunhai Bodyguard Service and has been in the business for three years since leaving the military.

When a new client arrives, he is cautious and declines people with a criminal record, especially one for trade of narcotics, relics or black money. "I don't want to get involved in any legal disputes," Liu says.

Yunhai signs contracts with its clients before each job – something unusual among bodyguards in China. In ancient times, security specialists were passed jobs through their connections and relied on word of mouth and reputation.

Modern contracts clarify fees, the mode of payment and compensation for injury. After signing an agreement, the bodyguard is entrusted with the goods or persons to protect.

Last year, Liu was hired to protect two students from a rich local family. The parents worried the children might be a target for criminals looking for an easy ransom.

"They asked me to accompany the kids every day, from leaving their homes in the morning to coming home late in the evening," Liu says.

He took the job, but hopes next time his company can instead find a woman bodyguard who likes children.

"Careful planning is critical to our business," Liu says. "Protecting commodities and money is much easier than protecting living persons."

Once, Liu was hired to protect a company's boss, and he had to break up five fights the man started at the bars they visited.

"During the worst of them, I was stuck fighting five men on my own," Liu says.

Historic business returns

Cangzhou, Hebei Province, Liu's hometown, is famous for generations of expert martial artists.

He left to join the army at age 18 and served in the marine corps. He was recruited for his constitution and past fighting experience. During his time in the marines he won several fighting championships.

"Many colleagues share my background," Liu says. "I have a lot of friends from the military who are in this business."

But only months ago, the business was a secret. China did not recognize security as a legit-



Students are practicing and training at Yunhai Bodyguard Service School. The training is similar to that of a military camp.



Yunhai also receives students from Africa.



Students spar with Romanian military.

Photos provided by Yunhai

imate businesses. Yunhai used to operate under a less obvious name: "Beijing Yunhai Elite Security Technology Consulting." It relied on friends and handshakes to drive new customers.

"Private companies were not allowed to provide this service," Liu says: he served only four assignments last year.

But bodyguards were common a century ago.

In the late Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) and early Republic of China (1911-1949), when most of the country was in the throes of revolution, businessmen hired bodyguards to accompany them on their trips.

The sector vanished when the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949: it was hard to sell protection when the government owned all property and all business.

But special bodyguards came back two decades ago to assist in cash moves between banks, security companies and financial institutions. They were the only non-military force allowed to carry firearms.

The lack of legal recognition for the industry did not prevent people from engaging in it – just from actively advertising it.

Liu's office was in a low-profile eastern suburb.

"People always think bodyguards should wear suits and glasses," Liu says, smiling. "That's too exaggerated." He wears casual clothing and keeps his hair cropped short.

Guaranteed work

Liu earns 6,000 to 8,000 yuan each month, but invests much of that back into further training in computers, electronics, English, psychology, law and first aid.

In Beijing, a private school

opened two years ago to train bodyguards. They learn martial arts and the use of small weapons like guns with rubber bullets and pepper sprays.

More and more rich people are trying to keep a low profile to avoid blackmail and violence at the hands of the emerging local mafia.

Along the coast, the protection sector generates 100 billion yuan. Many rich people have approached local gangs for protection, which carries its own risks.

"Government has realized this and thought it was better to legitimize the sector rather than let it mingle with the black market," Liu says.

"The business is guaranteed to develop fast," he says.

Since the new law took effect, Liu's company is now able to recruit students and employees publicly, promote its services and seek legal redress when there is a contract dispute.

"Under this law, we can act with all the rights of a formal company," Liu says. He and his partners expect to open a school for bodyguards soon.

"It's not all violence and fighting," Li Chunyang from the Beijing school says. "We provide other courses for office workers, like in computer security, driving, psychology and negotiations."



Li Ning, former sports star, is a bodyguard customer like many stars. CFP Photos

The 3D Generation

Country expects boom in 3D films and TV

US director James Cameron's new blockbuster *Avatar* is not just breaking records on the big screen. It is breaking them on giant 3D IMAX screens, too, and IMAX is going along for the lucrative ride.



Local residents queue to buy tickets for the 3D movie *Avatar*.

CFP Photo

IMAX bets on China

Higher ticket prices aren't stopping Chinese people from soaking up Cameron's epic tale of mankind's attempt to colonize an alien planet, and that is sending revenues at Ontario-based IMAX through the roof.

IMAX Corp. said recently it was in talks with film outfits in China as the company moves to cement its presence in Asia.

"The US has 300 million people and 35,000 screens. China has 1.3 billion people and 4,000 screens, the opportunity speaks for itself," Greg Foster, chairman and president of Filmed Entertainment, told Reuters.

In June, IMAX announced a film deal with Huayi Brothers, China's biggest studio, for IMAX's first foreign language film, *Aftershock*, scheduled for release this year.

The Canadian company has 20 theaters in China, and Don Savant, senior vice president and managing director for Asia Pacific, said IMAX would have more than 48 theaters in commercial multiplexes in China by 2012.

He said demand in the country remained robust for IMAX theater tickets, which are typically 50 percent more expensive than average ticket prices for ordinary cinemas.

"In China they are willing to

pay a 30 to 100 percent premium," Savant said, adding that while IMAX was expanding its presence in second- and third-tier cities, Shanghai and Beijing still offered large opportunities.

"There are big areas of the cities that are underserved. We could have six IMAX locations in each city," he said.

Foster said IMAX expansion would focus on China, but it was also looking for deals in Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia.

As of September 30, 2009, there were 403 IMAX theaters operating in 44 countries.

(Agencies)

Background

Special effects in Chinese movies lagging

"We Chinese filmmakers have to admit that Chinese movies are completely defeated," Lu Chuan, director of Nanking massacre movie *City of Life and Death*, said, bemoaning weak special effects in domestic films.

Are the special effects doomed to lag? Below are some reasons why and possible solutions.

Lack of science fiction and fantasy movies

Unlike the top 10 Hollywood box-office hits, China's top 10 include only one film featuring special effects: *CJ7*.

Special effects in the only Chinese fantasy film in recent years, *Painted Skin*, and war film *Assembly* were not impressive.

Blockbusters such as *The Founding of a Republic*, *She's the One* and *Red Cliff* used very few special effects. Those that had an abundance, such as *The Promise* and *Kung Fu Hustle*, did not make it to the top 10.

Chinese moviemakers' skill in creating special effects is not improving partly due to a lack of practice making: science fiction and fantasy movies on the scale of the *Lord of Rings* trilogy and *Transformers*.

Domestic filmmakers believe special effects are merely tools to "enhance production," thus they do not invest in its latest technology.

Lack of budget and advanced technology

Creating special effects requires a huge financial investment, time and talent. A major reason for weak spe-

cial effects in Chinese movies is limited resources.

"In the West, the timeline for making a film full of special effects is several times longer than that in China. They plan for one or two years; we only allocate two months. They spend one or two years producing it; we only spend three or four months. Hollywood has more money and human resources," a special effects supervisor said.

He thinks Hong Kong's special effects technology is at least 10 years behind Hollywood's. "Hong Kong filmmakers could not develop the technology in *Transformers* even if they were given 10 years."

Other experts think the gap is not as vast as it seems. The main issue is limited production time, one said, since Asian movies face pressure to come out as soon as possible.

(Agencies)

Analyst:

Is China ready for 3D?

Avatar has opened a Pandora's Box in the country's film industry. Its historic box-office success aside, many wonder: is China ready for 3D?

The answer might not be too optimistic, at least for now.

For 3D film development, imagination is the key, said film analyst and Tsinghua University professor Ying Hong. He said it is a long path for the country to develop a first-rate 3D film, a medium more challenging to conceptualize than implement. "The 3D film generation has come. We're not ready, but have to cope," he said.

The same situation confronts the local 3D TV industry, a field that was suddenly thrust under the spotlight last week when ESPN and Discovery separately unveiled plans to develop 3D channels this year.

Household appliance magnates like Sony, Philips and Panasonic all have released their own lines of 3D televisions.

Local companies like Hisense and TCL reacted quickly and said they were ready to produce their own lines no later than this year.

"China is not lagging behind foreign countries in the area of 3D TV technology. We can even say we're on the same starting line," said Ju Xinhai, director of marketing and sales of TCL New Technology, a TCL branch specializing in 3D TV research and development.

But high prices and a lack of program choices are two main obstacles in the promotion of 3D TV in China. Zhao Handing, secretary general of the China Video Industry Association, said a 3D-capable television set costs between 60,000 and 100,000 yuan, and that's not including the potentially high fees for receiving 3D TV channels.

China says it is biggest victim of cyber attacks

(IDG News Service) China on

Tuesday denied any role in alleged cyber attacks on Indian government offices, calling itself instead the biggest victim of hackers.

When asked about Google's allegation that cyber attacks launched from China hit the US search giant, foreign ministry spokesman Ma Zhaoxu said Chinese companies were also often hit by cyber attacks.

"China is the biggest victim of hacking attacks," Ma said, citing last week's hacking of Baidu.com, the country's top search engine.

Top judge gets life sentence for graft

(AFP) A court in Hebei Province sentenced a former top supreme court judge to life in prison Tuesday for taking bribes and other graft charges.

Huang Songyou, 52, is the latest top official snared in a stepped-up campaign against corruption, which President Hu Jintao has described as one of the greatest threats to the country.

Xinhua News Agency said Huang, the former deputy head of the supreme court had been given a life sentence, his personal property confiscated and his political rights revoked.

Huang was convicted by the Langfang Intermediate People's Court of taking 3.9 million yuan in bribes from 2005 to 2008 while serving on the Supreme People's Court and of embezzling 1.2 million yuan in 1997 while serving on a lower court in the south.

Huang confessed to his crimes during the investigation, and most of his ill-gotten wealth had already been retrieved, Xinhua reported.

WWF says wild tigers face extinction

(AFP) The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) warned Tuesday that the wild tiger faced extinction in China after having been decimated by poaching and the destruction of its natural habitat.

"If there are no urgent measures taken, there is a high risk that the wild tiger will go extinct," Zhu Chunquan, conservation director of biodiversity at WWF China, said.

Zhu said China's State Forestry Administration (SFA) estimated there were only 50 tigers left in the wild. The SFA said that around 20 Siberian tigers remained in China's northeast, 20 Bengal tigers in Tibet and 10 Indochinese tigers in the southwest.

"Globally, WWF estimates that if poaching and other threats continue, there are around 30 years left until the tiger goes extinct," he told AFP.

China banned international trade in tiger bones and related products in 1993, Zhu said, but preventing all poaching and illegal trade remains a challenge.

(Agencies)

Sports finally popular as leisuretime activity



As people are getting wealthier, outdoor leisure sports like tennis, golf, marathon running, cycling, basketball and swimming are becoming popular. CFP Photo

By Zhao Hongyi

Five Star Basketball Camp, a leisure sports promoter from the US, struggled when it first tried to promote basketball in China in 2005. This year could not be more different.

With people getting richer, many are devoting more time and money to leisure sports like ultra-marathons, skiing, mountain biking, tennis, golf and horseback riding, AFP reported.

No longer a privilege

"It all happened overnight," Kitty Xiao, manager of Five Star Basketball Camp, said.

When the camp came to Beijing five years ago, "most wealthy Chinese we met with said they had no time to waste on leisure sports," Xiao said.

Only two years later in 2007, business boom. Applicants poured into their office at the Liangmaqiao Diplomatic Compound near the Lufthansa Center.

The basketball camp is not the only active leisure sports promoter.

When The North Face 100 began accepting applications for its marathon courses last year, it thought most would opt only for the 6.2-mile run fun, Julia Cui, the company's China director, told AFP.

The organizers were shocked when most applicants chose the 100-kilometer race, which started at the Great Wall and passed the Ming Tombs outside Beijing last April.

"In 2006, only 5,000 people attended the race. Last year, we had 14,000," Cui said. He attributed the boom to lingering

Olympic fever.

"[It's encouraged] many Chinese drop their limited entertainments like mahjong, tennis and badminton in exchange for mountain biking and road cycling," the AFP report said.

Such sports used to be the domain of wealthy foreigners, but today more people are participating in amateur sports, the report said.

"If you investigate carefully, you'll see this is all being driven by the new middle class," Chris Renner, president of Helios Partners China agency, said.

New local promoters

Several years before the 2008 Olympics, the central government took its first step to encourage people to be active by ordering local governments to allocate money for better exercise equipment in residential communities.

While required as part of the country's Olympic commitment, it also encouraged many to pursue outdoor activities, driving new people to ski resorts, stables and outdoor exercise camps, most owned and operated by private investors.

That in turn created a new

market for chain sporting goods dealers like Sanfo Outdoor Products in Beijing.

Zhan Hen, a graduate from Peking University, opened Sanfo. After 10 years on hard times, the chain suddenly has 18 stores in major cities. It also runs online shops and sports clubs with more than 10 million members.

Luye is one those sports club organizers. Since 2005, when it was founded in Guangzhou, Luye has offered leisure sports like mountain climbing, rock climbing, skiing and horseback riding.

"We started our business in 2005 without a clear picture of its future," Hai Guang, general manager of its website, said. In fewer than five years the company has opened outlets throughout China. "It has all developed too fast," he said.

Guangzhou will host the Asian Games this year and the first International Leisure Sports Expo and Exhibition from March 30 to April 1.

Bright future for the market

Economist Intelligence Unit reported in October that the

domestic leisure sports market is worth 10 billion to 13.5 billion yuan.

"Though it is only a fraction of the \$60 billion (410 billion yuan) global market, commercialization is taking root," the report said.

"The leisure sports market is tremendous," Pang Leiming, a professor of Beijing Sports University, said. "The sport connects the demands for facilities, equipment and courses, provides more jobs and helps people stay healthy, all of which can benefit the country in the long term."

"We should use leisure sports as another way to stimulate the economy," Lin Pin, professor of the School of Sports and Economy, Zhejiang University, said. Many office workers in big cities face severe stress every day. Slowly, they are becoming used to spending money on sports and entertainment, Professor Lin said.

But those playing the market are cautious. "This is still a niche market for the rich who have money and time," Zhan Hen, of Sanfo, said. "But this may be a sign there is undeveloped potential."

Index futures to attract institutional investors

By Zhao Hongyi

The State Council approved the two new business categories for a trial basis last Friday. Encouraged by the news, the Shanghai A stock market opened 3.3 percent higher on Monday this week.

The Shanghai stock market fell 2.5 percent the week before when the central bank moved to tighten liquidity and add share supplies to cool excessive prices.

The country's introduction of stock-index futures and margin trading is expected to attract more institutional investors, who CITIC Securities analyst Liu Yang says are best positioned to benefit by using it to hedge their transactions.

Individual investors are better off with less risky, traditional trades, Zhou Yaxin, an analyst, said.

It has been nearly 15 months since the country's securities watchdog said it would allow the categories on a trial basis.

But a new market does not mean easy money.

Tao Changgao, director of the Institute of Finance and Securities Studies from the People's University of China, was very direct. "The central government is providing a new market for investors to play: it never promised they would win," he said.

The Wall Street Journal praised the government's decision, saying it "has long been hesitant to introduce new financial derivatives and tools."

This time, it provides political protection to investors by introducing the two financial products.

The Financial Times was more skeptical, saying crucial details like which investors will have access to the markets and when, were absent.

But many worry the new markets will lead to even worse speculation.

Yuen, speaking at a conference in Shanghai, said 85 percent of the trades in the yuan-denominated A-share markets are conducted by retail investors.

"Fortunately, the central government decided to do this when the stock index was around 3,000 points," Shao Lin, a market analyst for Bohai Securities, said.

"It is much better than if it were at the 6,000 points," she said, referring to the period of peak speculation two years ago. The Shanghai stock market fell below 2,000 points shortly after.

Sources say the stock market regulator is finalizing details for market entry, stating that investors must have a minimum capital of 500,000 yuan to enter the new markets.

CITIC analyst Liu predicts the new categories will be available in the second quarter.

'No Pants Subway Ride' faces ban

By Zhang Dongya

On January 10, some 5,000 people took off their pants on subways in 44 cities around the world. It was the 9th annual No Pants Subway Ride organized by US improvisation troupe Improv Everywhere.

A week later, more than a dozen people in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, followed suit, saying they just wanted to have some fun, while promoting a low-carbon lifestyle. The Guangzhou Subway Company was not amused and said it will take measures to prevent similar events as they disturbed public order and undermined social morality.

Last Sunday, 18 young people rode Guangzhou's Subway Line 2 at noon with only their undergarments covering the bottom half of their bodies. Some read newspapers or magazines during the ride, while others held posters with environmental slogans like, "Rescue the Earth"; a few wrote the words on their legs or underpants. The participants said they were promoting a low-carbon lifestyle and an environmentally friendly Asian Games, which will be held in the city in November.

"I learned that the event has been held in US cities for the past nine years and that it has been a lot of fun. It is also a good way to inform people about environmentalism," Liang Shuxin, 34, the Guangzhou event organizer, said.

The participants, many in their 20s, said they felt embarrassed to take off their pants in front of others on the subway. Some could not help laughing at themselves as they removed their clothing. Their fellow passengers were puzzled by what was unfolding. One asked, "Are you shooting a commercial?"

Liang, who works for social portal tianya.cn, said he was initially worried others would think they were insane. But he saw that people understood their bizarre behavior once they explained their objectives.

The Guangzhou Subway Company weighed in, saying it disapproved of the stunt. "We did not notice it since they slipped off their trousers after they entered the coaches," a spokesman said.

He said they received complaints about it from other passengers. One mother, who was on the subway with her young daughter, said she found the act indecent and she "hurriedly covered the little girl's eyes."

The company said people should exhibit basic social etiquette in public and consider other people's feelings. Undressing in the subway might scare other passengers and draw crowds, which pose a threat to public safety and social order, the spokesman said.

Liang has been planning a bigger event next year: at least 100 participants in and out of Guangzhou. But the subway company's response complicated matters.

"Next time we will talk to the subway company in advance. If it fails, we will do it in another way somewhere else," he said.

Liang said one thing he learned from the event was that the public still lacked awareness about environmental protection. "They think it has nothing to do with them," he said.

On Wednesday, Liang wrote a letter to Zhang Guangning, Guangzhou's mayor, suggesting the municipal government establish a "low-carbon month" to promote an environmentally-friendly lifestyle. To exert extra pressure, he also sent the letter to the local *Southern Metropolis Daily* and *New Express Daily*.

"The event does copy a foreign idea, like some people said. But I do not think that is important, because I've attached to it an original advocacy: environmentalism," he said.



More than a dozen young people took off their pants on Guangzhou's subway to promote environmentalism last Sunday. The subway company said they disturbed social order, while some people complained of the stunt's lack of originality.

Photos provided by Information Times



Comments

Consideration was foremost

I followed the event from beginning to end. They did not plan it to be big and were concerned about not bothering others. They chose a terminal station of Subway Line 2 and cars at the end of the train, which they thought would be less crowded. At above 10 C, it's been warmer these days in Guangzhou and it's not rare to see people wearing shorts on the subway. So I do not agree that they went "too far." It was OK with passengers around them and I did not expect a huge negative reaction.

— Zhong Junfeng, reporter for Guangzhou-based Information Times who broke the story

No connection between environmentalism and undressing

What does environmental protection have to do with dropping one's pants? There are many recent examples of Chinese people "borrowing" foreign ideas, then adding an element like environmentalism. But it's just not decent to slip off your pants in a public place — even in the name of environmental protection. There are many things one can do to "rescue the earth": do not use disposable chopsticks, paper cups and batteries.

— Seeking Dreams, blogger on sohu.com

Be original and polite

I think events like this add excitement to life, but if participants want to really make an impression they should come up with an original idea. Part of the impact of such events is their originality. And if they're serious about raising awareness for environmental issues, there are more productive ways of doing it. While this is partly done out of fun, it would be polite to avoid times of day when there are many children on the train.

As for the company, I think it certainly can ban activities like this if other passengers complain. The subway is a space where you can't help standing or sitting close to other people, and the company has the right to prevent someone from having to get cozy with a pants-less reveler.

— Tom Christensen, American working in Beijing

Shows courage and social tolerance

This behavior has something in common with the hippie activities of the mid-1900s. Participants might do it to release pressure or to challenge social norms; it takes courage for an office worker to ride the subway in only his underwear. At the very least, the event shows a higher level of tolerance in society today.

— Zhu Jingjun, professor at the Social Work Department of Guangdong University of Technology

Nothing more than fun

Foreigners come up with these events purely for fun, so why do Chinese people always have to add some "noble" bit to make them look more meaningful? Even the organizer admitted it was basically for fun. It would be a stretch and hypocritical to connect it with promoting a low-carbon lifestyle ahead of the Asian Games.

— Hidden Dragon, netizen on forum.xinhuanet.com

To live or to write

Young writers face dilemma amid declining literary market



Readers browsing The Story of Du Lala's Promotion at a Beijing bookstore. While readers are eager for good writings, there is no huge demand for contemporary Chinese literature. IC Photo

By Huang Daohen

"Life is dear, love is dearer. Both can be given up for freedom." The words of Hungarian poet Petofi Sandor (1823-1856) might have encouraged young Chinese writers to stick to their dreams when they memorized them in school.

But in 21st century China, it is evident struggling writers need more than dreams. Surrounded by a growing number of affluent people and shiny gadgets, many young writers have abandoned the craft for a "steady" source of income. For those who persist, there is a dilemma: live or write?

Impulses behind writing

Yang Sheng sips coffee in a cafe in the Houbai restaurant and bar district as he reflects on his and his generation's contributions to contemporary literature.

Yang looks like a typical southerner: he is of average height and has soft features matched by an equally soft accent. Dressed casually and wearing sports shoes, the 29-year-old is the author of three collections of short stories and essays.

"But that does not mean I'm rich," Yang says. He published his first collection of short stories, *Successful Loser*, in 2004, while he was a college student in Shanghai.

Indeed, compared to his contemporaries Han Han, Guo Jingming and Zhang Yueran – today's most popular young writers who have sold millions of books – Yang is a struggling writer. *Successful Loser* brought him fame and a small fortune, but he spent much of the money to self-publish his other books since no publisher wanted them.

"I still believe every literary genre can find some readers," he says.

Over the past decade, the number of young writers like Yang, born in the 1980s, has mushroomed. For lack of a more creative name, the group has been called

"There are so many problems these days. Who has time to read? And the people whose lives are more comfortable, they just want to be entertained."

"post-1980s writers."

Yang does not agree with the label. He says he would rather call himself an independent writer among the "beipiao," a word used to describe people who have neither a house or a full-time job in Beijing.

Before coming to the capital three years ago, Yang worked for a Shanghai media company that compensated him more than adequately. "I'd long been told it is tough to be a writer, so I got a job after graduation," he says.

But writing called to him and he soon found office work boring. "My nature is such that I'm interested in other people, talking to and writing about people," Yang says. He decided he was finished with corporate life, packed his bags and moved to Beijing.

Life in the "city of culture," as Yang describes Beijing, has influenced his writing. But there are many obstacles, the biggest of which is making ends meet.

Yang worked for a time at a translation company, but soon found that it left him little time for his real love. "I just want to use my own words to record my life experiences. Whether to publish them or not is a thing for the future," he says.

He currently does freelance writing to earn money for rent and meals. He lives in a 100-meter-square apartment in Tiantongyuan with two other beipiao writers.

Tarnished contemporary literature

While young writers like Yang are confident about the future of Chinese literature, experts are more than a little worried. "Literature is not greatly appreciated these days and there is a decline in the public's literary taste," says Zhang Qiang, a professor of Chinese literature at the Beijing Language and Culture University.

In the past, writers played the role of spiritual guide, Zhang says. "Now some writers are more concerned about money and fame, and reflect less on the quality of their writings."

Caught in the frenzied pace of a changing society, today's writers are not on the pulse of society and fail to attract interest, much less offer reflections on life, he says.

But the blame does not rest entirely on writers, the professor says. "From the late 1990s up to the present, a great number of people put literature aside, often forgetting it altogether."

Nowadays, Zhang says the most popular books are those that have practical use. China does not have a best-sellers list, but a survey of Xinhua Book Stores shows it is economics books, computer textbooks, dictionaries and memoirs that are flying off the shelves.

"There are so many problems these days. Who has time to read? And the people

whose lives are more comfortable, they just want to be entertained," Zhang says.

Yang is aware of this situation, but he remains optimistic. "This is understandable. People are bound to pay more attention to practical things during a period of rapid development," he says. "Once a person's basic needs are met, I believe the appreciation for literature will return."

Market for literature

What does the future hold for post-80s writers and contemporary Chinese literature?

Professor Zhang says the answer lies in the basic law of supply and demand. "We need a market for literature," he says.

Zhang says the profit-driven publishing industry only cares about publicity; publishers are also more likely to cater to subjects of general interest. "The overall quality of books is declining. It used to take a year to write, edit and publish a book. Now, many books are ready in one to two months," he says.

"Though the market generates a lot of trash and problems, this is a necessary start" to rehabilitating the industry, he says. Readers need to be taught what good literature is and playing by the rules of the market is the only way to bring back readers' interest in good literature, the professor says.

Zhang points out that domestic recognition alone is not enough for a revival of Chinese literature. China's soft power may have increased in recent years, but the country is still struggling to make a mark in the world literary scene. In 2008, China published 6.9 billion copies of 275,000 new titles. Among them, only a few dozen will see foreign language editions.

"Contemporary Chinese literature remains unknown outside the country," Zhang says. "We should also win global readers' attention."

It seems a literary revival starts with people choosing words over money.

Beijing-born Englishman helps build cooperatives

By Wang Yu

Michael Crook looks like your average middle-aged foreigner. But the moment he opens his mouth and rattles off in fluent Chinese with a Beijing accent, you know he cannot be all that ordinary.

"I like to lie low," the Englishman said. "Of course I have my story, however what we've done to develop the cooperative scene in China is more important." Crook is talking about the International Committee for the Promotion of Chinese Industrial Cooperatives (ICCIC) where he serves as vice chairman.

The nongovernment organization was founded in Hong Kong in 1939 and opened an office in Beijing a decade later. The NGO, which has three full-time employees, largely offers training on establishing cooperatives.

He gives a quick definition of a cooperative: a business organization owned and operated by a group of individuals for their mutual benefit. "A cooperative, in a sense, is similar to a corporation, except its directors also work as employees," he said during an interview in their office in an apartment building in Shaoyaoju.

Crook's interest in public welfare projects was inherited, one might say. His mother Isabel Crook, a former teacher at the Beijing Foreign Studies University, used to work with one of ICCIC's founders. Isabel was born to a Canadian missionary couple in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, in 1915. Crook's father David, a British Jew, came to China in 1938, inspired by Edgar Snow's book about the birth of Chinese communism, *Red Star Over China*.

Crook's parents met in Sichuan in 1940, when Isabel came back after college in Canada to

conduct a study on social work for her PhD dissertation. They married in London two years later, then returned to China after the founding of the People's Republic in 1949.

The couple later joined the Communist Party of China (CPC). Crook said he admires his parents' spirit, but chose not to go down that road.

Crook was born in Beijing in 1951 and lived through the turbulent years of the Cultural Revolution (1966-76). Many schools were shut down during that anti-intellectual period, but Crook took risks to satisfy his thirst for knowledge: he stealthily borrowed books from the British Embassy.

He later attended college at Queen Mary University in England, then spent most of the 80s as a teacher at the Wesleyan University in the US.

He returned to Beijing in 1988 and volunteered at ICCIC at his mother's prompting. It was the same year the NGO resumed operations on the mainland after deciding to close down in 1952. Crook became a full-time staff member in the 90s.

"At first we looked for donations and offered financial support to people, especially in rural areas, to build cooperatives. But money brought new problems—it was very hard to track it down. You didn't know whether the money was used the right way or not," Crook said. The organization asked a German cooperatives expert to assess its work model, and received confirmation that handing out money was not working.

The group decided to change its tactic: it began offering training to cooperatives and helping the government develop cooperative projects. Last year, it assisted the French NGO Femmes du

Ningxia establish embroidery cooperatives for impoverished minority women.

"Many foreign NGOs are enthusiastic but lack experience working in China, especially dealing with the government. That's what we're good at," Crook said. "On the other hand, women in rural areas know little about legal issues and how to operate their business, how to organize people. They also need our training."

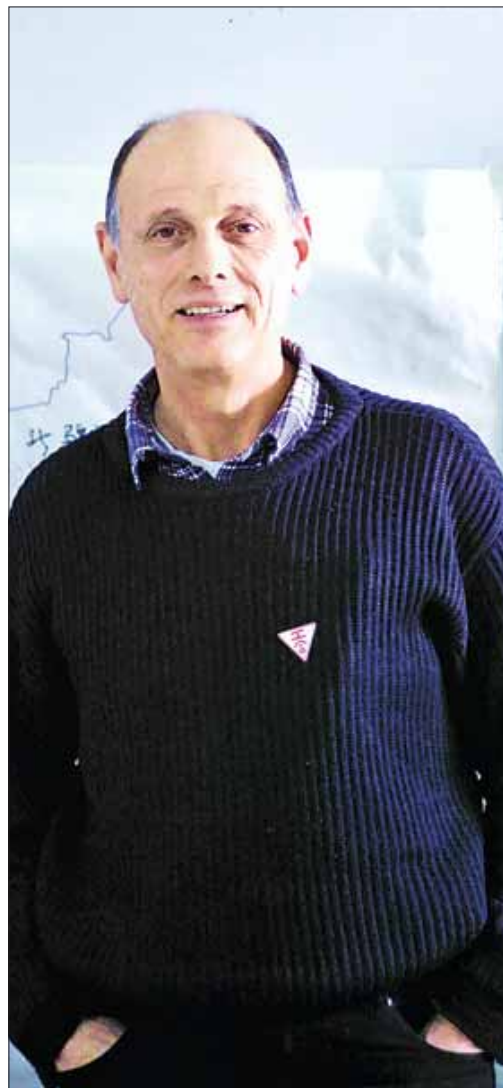
Most ICCIC members are experts in their professions, some of whom helped draft the first Chinese law on cooperatives. The organization was also involved in rebuilding efforts in Sichuan after the 2008 earthquake.

Many Chinese people associate cooperatives with a bygone age, when the world was primarily composed of agricultural societies. But Crook said cooperatives are exactly what we need to cope with modern-day challenges—whether in villages or metropolises.

"The concept of cooperatives can also be adopted in urban areas to help improve people's lives. Take laid-off workers for example; if they can organize cooperatives to start new careers, this would be more efficient than government policies and would lighten the government's load. It can also help solve the problems of the elderly," Crook said, adding that cooperatives can help support the country's booming middle class.

Besides working for ICCIC, Crook is also a member of the Beijing Cultural Relics Protection Association and was involved in starting China's first Roots and Shoots environmental group.

"I received my early education in China in the 1960s. You should know that we were educated to serve the people, and I never forgot that," he said.



Michael Crook

Photo by Wang Yu

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US burn specialists perform free surgery on child victims

By Li Zhixin

A group of US surgeons performed free operations on eight child burn victims at Air Force General Hospital (AFGH) last week. The children, ages 2 to 7, came from poor rural families.

The procedures involved four US surgeons and their Chinese counterparts. The first operation, on a 3-year-old girl with burnt fingers, took place Wednesday morning.

That afternoon doctors treated a more serious case: a boy with burns covering 90 percent of his body. "The burnt area is very large. To be honest, this procedure is a bit difficult for Chinese doctors because we haven't done surgery on such a large area before. Our American counterparts have more experience in these kinds of complex operations, so this is a very precious opportunity for us to cooperate and learn from each other," Cao Weihong, the director of AFGH's Burn and Plastic Surgery Center, said.

The next two days, the doctors re-operated on six patients who did not respond very well to their first surgeries.

"American doctors' knowledge of pediatric burn injury rehabilitation may be more advanced than that of Chinese doctors because we have years of practical experience. But Chinese medicine is like magic. Some burn ointments I've seen were very effective. They not only helped restore a smooth, healthy glow to the damaged skin, but they also helped relieve pain," James Allan Chamber, a member of the US med-



US surgeons examine a young girl's burned hand.

Photo provided by Angel Mom

ical team, said. "This is really a good opportunity for us to learn from our Chinese counterparts."

The free operation was the first of its kind organized by the American Handreach Foundation and Angel Mom Foundation of the China Charities Aid Foundation for Children (CCAFC). The two groups began cooperating in 2008 when Handreach helped Angel Mom bring two child burn victims to the US for free surgery.

The foundations collaborate on academic exchanges between American and Chinese doctors to enhance their knowledge of pediatric burn injury treatment and rehabilitation.

"Children left behind by their parents in rural areas are more easily injured because of the lack of parental supervision ... Most of these children's parents are migrant workers, so the children are left to grandparents who are usually not knowledgeable about safety," Shen Li, head of Angel Mom, said. "More than half of their injuries are related to burning and scalding."

Shen said Angel Mom has helped near 40 badly burned children undergo successful surgeries since AFGH's Burn Center was established in September 2009.

"We plan to spread advanced knowledge on pediatric burn

treatment and rehabilitation to rural hospitals nationwide beginning March, even though we're feeling the financial pinch," she said. "We hope more underprivileged children with burns and scalds can get proper, timely and effective treatment."

Angel Mom is a volunteer organization founded in 2006 by mothers who wanted to help poor abandoned children and those with complex trauma injuries. To date the foundation has helped more than 400 children and spent more than 1 million yuan on their treatment.

Angel Mom Foundation
Tel: 6871 3796

Theme party raises awareness for protection of old buildings



Local celebrities dress up for the party.



Laojieshi, a leading Tianjin Jazz band, has been performing since the 1980s.

Photos by Zhou Pu

By Annie Wei

Celebrity parties held in 20th century residences in the foreign concession area are a regular occurrence in Shanghai. Tianjin followed suit for the first time last Wednesday.

Elegancy, a style magazine in Tianjin, teamed up with the city's culture protection organization to host a 1920s theme party in Jingyuan. Invitees included Chinese celebrities and foreign executives based in Beijing and Shanghai.

Jingyuan, located in central Tianjin, was built in 1921 and is most famous for once being home to Puyi, China's last emperor. The three-story Spanish style building has three courtyards, beautiful balconies, fountains and a garden.

Wang Tingting, the event's planner from Tianjin Historical Architecture Restoration and Development company, said Puyi enjoyed such parties and was often seen on the dance floor.

Wang Yajun, *Elegancy's* chief editor, said the event aimed to raise greater awareness about Jingyuan among locals and for-

eigners. The residence is open to visitors in the daytime, but it draws few locals or business travelers despite its inexpensive entrance fee of 20 yuan.

Tianjin, a treaty port in the late 19th century, has numerous old, foreign-designed buildings, some of them under government protection. Wang said the organizers hope the gathering will help promote the repair, maintenance and preservation of these cultural heritage sites.

"As one of *Elegancy's* second-year-anniversary events ... we tried to find an opportunity to promote local chic culture," she said, adding that the party's design was inspired by the popular 1920s nightclubs in Tianjin and Shanghai. Laojieshi Jazz, a local band popular since the 1980s, provided the entertainment that evening.

Among its 100 participants were a group of elderly intellectuals who remember socializing at ballroom dances in the 1980s, including the dean of Tianjin No. 1 Hospital and professors from Nankai University.

Event

UCI Track Cycling World Cup Classics

The International Cycling Union (UCI) Track Cycling World Cup happens today through Sunday at Laoshan Velodrome. Athletes from more than 50 countries are expected to participate in the contest, which is sponsored by the General Administration of Sports of China, the Chinese Cycling Association, the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Sports and the Government of the Shijingshan District of Beijing.

Where: Laoshan Velodrome, 15 Laoshan Xi Jie, Shijingshan District

When: January 22-24, 10:30 am - 4:40 pm

Tel: 6669 9185

Cost: 50 yuan

Daffodil Sculpture

In the West, the daffodil symbolizes respect and faithful love. In China, the flower is one of the 10 "most favored traditional flowers" and symbolizes good fortune, beauty, purity and elegance. Professor Liu Zhenqing from Beijing University of Technology will share with the audience his talent in daffodil root sculpture.

Where: Dandel Art Space, Building 1, Jingyuan, Beijing Image Base, 3 Guangqulu, Chaoyang District

When: January 23, 10 am - noon

Tel: 6770 8966

Cost: 20 yuan

Leaving China with Your Pet

The International Center for Veterinary Services (ICVS) discusses step-by-step the process of taking pets out of Beijing and China, including vaccination requirements, to ensure a smooth trip. ICVS will also talk about pet transport safety and minimizing travel-related stress on pets.

Where: Kent Center, 29 Liangmaqiao Lu, Anjialou, Chaoyang District

When: January 23, 11 am - noon

Tel: 8456 1939

Cost: Free

Muay Thai Amateur Championships

As the only Muay Thai club in town, each of Club Hero's championship events attracts hundreds of spectators. The 2010 Muay Thai Amateur Championships "Battlefield 3" will be held at Black Tiger Club Hero tomorrow evening.

Where: Club Hero, Suit 110, Building D, Cable 8 Loft Yard, 8 Langjiayuan, Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District

When: January 23, 6-10 pm
Tel: 6581 5570

Cost: 50 yuan for general seats, 60 yuan for ring-side seats

(By Wei Ying)

Social organization collects used clothing for charity

By Annie Wei

Now that spring is just around the corner, people are already taking stock of their wardrobe for the new season. For many, there will be a checklist of things to buy and a pile of clothes to discard. Clean, relatively new clothes do not have to end up in the dump; there are a number of options in a city as big and busy as Beijing.

At the end of winter and summer, residential communities and Chinese workplaces usually gather unwanted clothes and move them to warehouses, where secondhand clothing vendors collect them to sell to poor families. This system prolongs the life of clothes and helps low-income families.

The Rotaract Club of Beijing is lending a hand in this effort. Until January 30, it is collecting used clothing, shoes and blankets that will be donated to charities, including the Residential Learning Center for Underprivileged Children and the Female Network.

The Rotaract is an international non-profit organization, composed of young men and women, involved in cultural activities and outreach projects.



A 4-year-old girl and her mother donate clothes to migrant children.

CFP Photo

Shanghai Expo only preselling individual peak-day tickets

By Chu Meng

Tickets for the Shanghai Expo this year will be on sale until April 30. All individual tickets for peak days will be presold, contrary to initial plans. This means the tickets will no longer be available on the said days, the Bureau of Shanghai World Expo Coordination announced Monday.

Tickets for the expo from May 1 to October 31 are divided into two categories: individual and group tickets. Each category is further divided into two types: peak-day and standard-day tickets. Peak days are from May 1 to 3, October 1 to 7 and October 25

to 31; the rest are standard days.

"We will keep visitor traffic at 400,000 on opening day, which will be the most crowded day. Preselling is being done to prevent the problem of visitors who do not have tickets," Chen Xianjin, vice president of the bureau, said, explaining the reason for the change in policy.

Visitors who will not be joining tour groups can buy peak-day tickets through the expo's authorized agents, travel agencies and the expo's website, expo2010.cn. People overseas can also purchase tickets through authorized international agents.



The Shanghai Expo site under construction

CFP Photo

Chen said the expo's website will reflect the latest status of pre-sold tickets.

Shanghai Expo's authorized domestic ticket agents:

Bank of Communications
Website: bankcomm.com/
BankCommSite/en/index.jsp

China Mobile Communication Corporation

Website: chinamobile.com/en/
China Post

Website: chinapost.cn/English/
China Telecom

Website:
en.chinatelecom.com.cn/

Train tickets for Spring Festival go on sale Wednesday



Local police show passengers the difference between real and fake railway tickets.

CFP Photo

By Annie Wei

People planning to travel by train during Spring Festival should begin booking their tickets as soon as possible, the railway ticketing administration said. In Beijing, tickets went on sale for the most important occasion of the year Wednesday, 10 days ahead of any other city.

The administration warns passengers to buy tickets from four railway stations or a ticketing agency, instead of a scalper.

There is expected to be three peak periods for train travel surrounding Spring Festival, which falls on February 14. It will be difficult to purchase tickets from January 24 to 27 and trains are

expected to be packed as students and migrant workers travel back to their hometowns, the administration said.

The next waves of travel will occur from February 3 to 7 and February 14 to 17, when office workers and businesspeople make their journeys home. Air tickets are also expected to spike during this period.

Since September 2009, train ticket payments have been available through Zhifubao, an online payment media. The service has been halted until further notice because of heavy sales.

Tickets may be returned, with a refund, up to six hours before the scheduled train departure.

Collection spots

Donors can drop off their things at the bars and restaurants below until January 30.

The Bridge Cafe

Where: Building 12, Huaqing Jiayuan, Chengfu Lu, Wudaokou, Haidian District

Tel: 8286 7026

Frontiers School

Where: 3/F Building 30, Dongzhong Jie, Dongzhimen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

Tel: 6413 1547

Istanbul

Where: B7 Xiushui Nan Jie, Jianguomen Wai Dajie (behind the Friendship Store), Chaoyang District

Tel: 6503 2700

Nearby the Tree

Where: 32A Sanlitun Nan Lu, Chaoyang District

Tel: 6415 1954

Salud

Where: 66 Nanluogu Xiang, Dongcheng District

Tel: 6402 5086

Tim's Texas BBQ

Where: 2 Xiushui, 14 Dongdaqiao Lu, Jianguomen, Chaoyang District

Tel: 6532 5905

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: weiyang@ynet.com

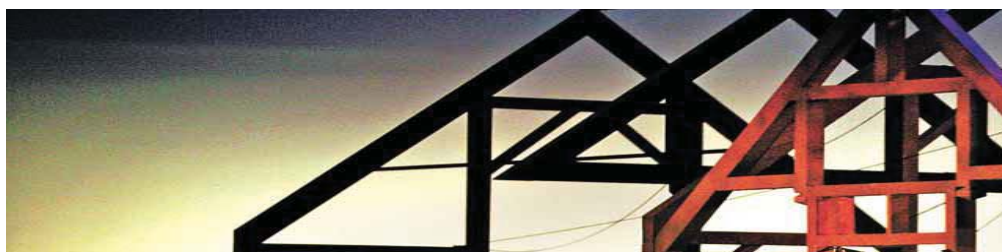
I'm looking for white furniture finish and paint or varnish that has minimal VOC (volatile organic compound) emission. Can you give me any leads?

Try the paint brand Auro, which is manufactured in Germany. Its website china-auro.com has a comprehensive list of its products; it sells paint for furniture, wooden floors, walls and ceilings and wooden surfaces.

I'm moving to Beijing from Toronto and I'm bringing my dog. Is it going to be a problem finding an apartment that will allow me to keep my dog?

This is going to be a huge undertaking. Air China does not accept pets, so look at other airlines. Such a long-distance flight can be traumatizing for a dog; some breeds have trouble breathing in the small luggage space. Upon reaching China, your pet will have to go through quarantine. Once you pass these hurdles, it won't be too difficult finding an apartment with a landlord who allows pets. But you need to live by local pet regulations: dogs longer than 35 centimeters are not allowed in central areas. You also need to register your pet with the police. It costs 1,000 yuan for the first year and 500 yuan for each succeeding year.

(By Wei Ying)



Nostalgic for the vil

An epic from Taiwan memory

In 1949, about 2 million Kuomintang soldiers and their families were shipped to Taiwan following Chiang Kai-shek's defeat on the mainland. Within a few years, hundreds of "military dependents' villages" were built all over the island to house those soldiers and their families.

The villages were simple and crude. Each family had roughly 30 square meters of space and the area was fenced off from the next family's with a bamboo palisade. All expected to return home soon.

Then a year passed. And another boxed in by bamboo.

The village became China in miniature because people spoke regional dialects and ate different foods.

Outside was the native Taiwanese population. Gradually the gates opened and the soldiers began to assimilate into their new home.

An important generation of Taiwanese children grew up. "Maybe because the parents are from different provinces, 80 percent of their children are beautiful and smart," Song Shaoqing, one of the founders of a Taiwan cross-talk group, said.

This generation is today's leaders, entertainers, educators and businesspeople: director Ang Lee, singer Teresa Teng and writer Lung Ying-tai.

Most of the villages have been torn down and remaining occupants shipped off to skyscraper housing. Little remains of this remarkable passage of history.

The prominent television producer Wang Wei-chung was born and grew up in a village in Chiayi County. When the village was scheduled for demolition in 2007, he answered with a documentary.

"For every four or five people in Taiwan, at least one has some association with the

villages. The villages were the refugee camps of our parents, but for my generation, it was our playground," Wang said.

Two years ago, Wang asked his friend Stan Lai, a celebrated playwright and director, to write a play based on village stories.

The Village, their play, is coming to Beijing's Century Theater.

It is an epic telling the story in three acts of the trials and tribulations of three generations of village dwellers, focusing on three families who live next to each other.

The first generation is the first settlers, those who came from the mainland as a defeated army in 1949. Their offspring are the second generation, whose blazing vitality is the centerpiece of the show. And the second generation's children are the third generation, far detached from their grandparents' villages.

The play is a theatrical record of a moment in history. It is a radiant celebration of life in both tragedy and comedy – the veterans' nostalgia and their simple but satisfying life.

As an American-born Taiwanese, Lai was not a village child; but his friends were.

The two reviewed the stories of 25 families and narrowed it down to three families over three periods: first from 1949 to 1950, then between 1968 and 1975 and brought the story up to the present day, covering the period between 1987 and 2007.

The show played first in Taipei in December 2008 to critical acclaim. "It was like writing history for your own people. And this is recent history that people had experienced. There were all sorts of people in the theater, some bringing their grandparents," Lai said.

One night in Taipei, after the show, an actor brought his grandmother backstage to see the director. When she saw Lai, the grandmother started crying, "You wrote

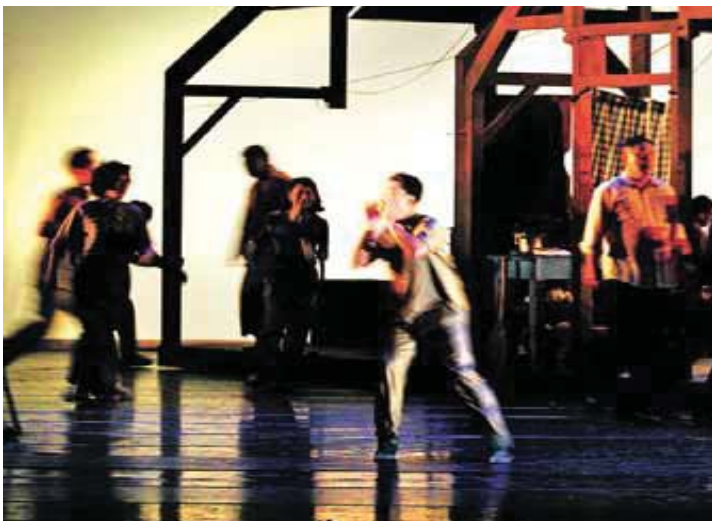
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"For every four or five people in Taiwan, at least one has some association with the villages. The villages were the refugee camps of our parents, but for my generation, it was our playground."

— Wang Wei-chung, Taiwan's television producer

"It was like writing history for your own people. And this is recent history that people had experienced. There were all sorts of people in the theater, some bringing their grandparents."

— Stan Lai, playwright and director



lage

By He Jianwei

Sometimes you can touch history.

It might be the house you lived in, the tree you climbed or the ground you played on. When those tangible memories vanish, nostalgia moves in to take their place.

In Taiwan, hundreds of temporary villages built 60 years ago for Kuomintang soldiers and their families are a memory for the older generation; these buildings will be demolished.

To preserve their collective memory, Taiwan's top director and producer collaborated on a play to tell the story of the island since 1949.

e. You know your play is about me and us and everything you wrote was
y life."

character is connected to some famous person.

instance, one bookworm in the second generation keeps silent unlike his brash
ne director Edward Yang was a prototype for the character. He grew up in
re and struggled to communicate into his teen years. His movies *A Brighter Day* and *A One and A Two* discuss his teenage problems.

play opens with lines of people checking signing their names as they boarded a
ne boarded under false names or masquerading as husband and wife.

lity, actress Lin Ching-hsia's aunt went to Taiwan with a soldier posing as her
e. They got married after they arrived at the island.

the younger generation, they are learning so much about the history of Taiwan,"

ought the eight-year rule of Chen Shui-bian slashed many of the island's ties
na in the classroom, depriving the younger generation of knowledge about the
es their parents suffered as immigrants in 1949.

play starts its tour of six mainland cities this month.

period of history is largely unknown on the mainland. In 1987, when Taiwanese
ere first allowed to visit the mainland, they came well dressed and bearing
like TV sets, refrigerators and laundry machines.

ere were not as rich as they looked. They had led a hard life in Taiwan," Lai said.
the people borrowed the suits and spent their savings to buy gifts for their visit
er almost 40 years.



Photos provided by China Arts & Entertainment Group



The Village

Where: Century Theater, 40 Liangmaqlao Lu,
Chaoyang District

When: February 5-7, 7:30 pm

Admission: 180-880 yuan

Tel: 6468 3311



Simple and crude "military dependents' villages" were built all over the island to house Kuomintang soldiers and their families.

Superfusion, marriage made in heaven or on the rocks?

By Charles Zhu

Today, China and the US complement each other economically and culturally.

Zachary Karabell, an economist, historian and former president of an asset-management firm, offers insight into that marriage in his fascinating book *Superfusion: How China and America Became One Economy and Why the World's Prosperity Depends on It* (352pp, Simon & Schuster, \$26).

In the wake of the catchy neologism "Chimerica" coined by Harvard professor Niall Ferguson, Karabell offers another picture of the unique relationship between China and the US: "the axis of the world economy."

China will become the world's second largest economic body this year, trailing only the US. China does the saving; America does the spending. The former lent more than \$2 trillion (13.7 trillion yuan) to the latter.

The two nations have become "one intertwined, integrated hypereconomy," Karabell writes: "the real engine of the world economy" as Ferguson puts it.

Never before have two nations of such size intermingled their economic fortunes to such a degree. "They are the superpowers of the global economic system, and their fusion is therefore a superfusion," Karabell writes.

Unlike Ferguson, who thinks Chimerica has contributed substantially to the global financial crisis, Karabell thinks that superfusion benefits all. He argues the global crisis would probably have been worse without it.

For a case in point, Karabell cites China's entry into the World Trade Organization in 2001, a move that marked "the birth of a new paradigm" in which American investment and expertise jump-started a new market. By 2006,

Morgan Stanley was making 12 percent of its profit underwriting Chinese companies.

"Normally a time of crisis like this would be the perfect time for attempts at economic retaliation, like trade restrictions and higher tariffs and the like," Karabell says. "In fact very little along those lines has happened. The ability to take measures is pretty limited."

"There can be no argument that US companies reaped extraordinary profits from the growth of China," he says, naming Kentucky Fried Chicken, Federal Express and Avon in his account.

He says US investment in China lessened the impact of the financial crisis because that money did not go into the real estate bubble and its attendant financial instruments like credit default swaps. This fact has been largely overlooked, he says, adding that Chinese lending to the US also financed the stimulus package, which has prevented things from worsening.

Ferguson sees the matter in another light. "For a time, Chimerica seems like a marriage made in heaven. Both economies grow [sic] so fast that they accounted for 40 percent of global growth between 1988 and 2007. The big question now is whether or not this marriage is on the rocks," Ferguson wrote in a *Newsweek* article. He warns against dangers and fragility in Chimerica.

But Karabell remains optimistic about this superfusion. "The two economies have become so intertwined that neither can extricate itself without considerable harm," Karabell says. "The US remains not only the most important market for Chinese goods but the source of much of the innovation and investment that has fueled China's domestic growth. China is

SUPERFUSION



HOW CHINA AND AMERICA
BECAME ONE ECONOMY
AND WHY THE WORLD'S
PROSPERITY DEPENDS ON IT
ZACHARY KARABELL



not only a vital source of funding for US government spending but an essential market for companies large and small looking for a new frontier for growth."

While Ferguson predicts that Chimerica's days will be numbered and be replaced by new conflicts and antagonisms that arise from China's naval development in the Pacific and Indian oceans and its search for natural resources in Africa, Karabell says "there is no sign on either side that conflict is either desirable or feasible."

All because of the economic fusion.

Mo Yan's new book centers on family planning



By He Jianwei

Three years have passed since Mo Yan's last novel *Life and Death are Wearing Me Out*. At the Beijing Book Fair held from January 8 to 10, Mo released *Frog* (340pp, Shanghai Literature and Art Publishing Group, 27 yuan), a story of China's family planning policy.

The protagonist is a good doctor. One dedicated to protecting infants and preventing miscarriages. She also aborts second children: lots of them.

She is based on Mo's aunt, a countryside obstetrician who delivered 10,000 children and aborted thousands of children as part of the family planning policy for rural areas.

"In her 50-year career, [my aunt] has been balancing two conflicting things and I'm sure it hurts her deep down," Mo said.

"Were it not for the family planning policy, I would have been the father of two children. That loss was my greatest pain."

The book's five parts are written in an epistolary style with four letters and one play. The plot in the letters is opposite of that in the play. The letters are the protagonist's real life and the play is an imaginary confession born in the heart.

China's family planning policy serves as the backdrop. "I didn't write a story about countryside doctors in China; I wrote one about human nature," he said.

Mo planned the book earlier in the 1980s when he first started writing. In Spring 2002, Mo started a novel about his aunt: he burnt out after 150,000 words. The book was set aside while he finished *Life and Death are Wearing Me Out* in 43 days.

When he picked up those 150,000 words again, he rewrote them from the beginning and added background about the policy. He wanted readers to see why and how she could abort child after child. His aunt has long figured into the story, but it was only with *Frog* that she became the lead.

Mo titled the book *Frog* as a symbol of life and its multiplication, since frogs are such prolific breeders.

"Frog," pronounced "wa" in Chinese, also has a similar pronunciation to the name of Nu Wa, the goddess in Chinese mythology who created mankind.

Timezone8 book listing

Timezone8 is a Hong Kong-based publisher, distributor and retailer of books on contemporary art, architecture, photography and design. This week, it recommends three new titles for *Beijing Today* readers.

Li Zhanyang: Scenes

By Gao Minglu, Paul Donker Duyvis and Li Xianting, 212pp, Timezone8, \$40.00

This comprehensive catalogue of sculptor Li Zhanyang's work shows the artist capture the exaggeratedly vulgar and sensual moments of daily life: from the slaughter of a pig to a businessman playing around with a prostitute to a father showing his daughter a dead rat in the street.

Liu Ye

By Bernhard Fibicher, Zhu Zhu, 134pp, Timezone8, \$25.00

Liu Ye's experience as one of the few Beijing-based artists to travel regularly between Europe and China has allowed him "to concentrate on himself." His world is shaped by memories from his younger years, taking in fairy tales and a child's concept of happiness.

Ji Dachun

By Bernhard Fibicher, Ah Cheng, Zhao Li and Pi Li, 96pp, Timezone8, \$40.00

Painter Ji Dachun's poetic use of pencil, ink and white space has always resonated with traditional portraits. But the satirical nature of his work is both contemporary and compelling – whether taking on Picasso, Duchamp or the male anatomy. In this monograph, each work takes as its inspiration a well-known tale, popular advertisement or television commercial which the artist twists with irony.

(By He Jianwei)



Creative comics no fantasy

By Wang Yu

Mainstream comic artists rarely profit from their work in China, where magazines and books have exceedingly limited distribution.

But indie artists have it even rougher.

Despite many artists are producing original comics, the scene draws few readers. So a few smart people got together to start Special Comix (SC), an indie comic album series, in 2004. Made by volunteer editors from different cities, the series offers a platform where new artists can get their ideas out to public.

Last December, SC3 was released first in Beijing and then headed south. The first run was only 1,000 copies, but Hu Xiaojiang, a comic artist and one of the editors, said that was still enough to prove there is opportunity to be found.



The 640-page 2.2-kilogram SC3 contains 45 artists' ideas about the reality.

Illustrations provided by Hu Xiaojiang

Heavy enough?

SC3 is distinguished by two features: its page count and weight. The editors spent a year and a half filling 640 pages with enough ink to hit 2.2 kilograms.

"We hoped the book would come out at less than 300 pages, thinner than the second edition. There were just too many good stories: we couldn't throw any out," Hu Xiaojiang, one of the chief editors, says.

One of the production bases was Nanjing, were Hu lives: Beijing was the other. The three chief editors have known each other for a long time and planned the first album to help promote friends. But as soon as the first album hit the presses, it was clear they needed a followup.

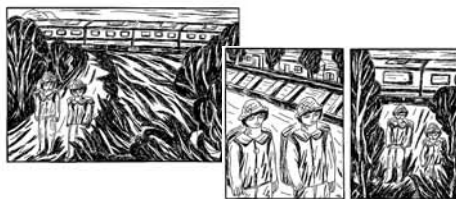
"As we kept making new episodes, the readership problem became clear. Of course we need to be able to count on long-time comic fans. But it takes the machinations of pop culture to attract first-time readers. We see the SC as an introduction for them," Hu says.

SC3 contains comic stories from 45 artists, including the editors, students, teachers, professional illustrators and machinists. The issue's stated theme in English was "future," but Hu says "future" fails to capture the full implications of the Chinese "qian tu": "different ways."

The SC2 was named as "fear," which encouraged the artists to make their submissions personal. Hu said they hope to focus on real life.

The latest issue includes stories about the Sichuan earthquake, the Olympics, SARS and bird flu. But one of Hu's favorites was Ivory Tower: the story of a family en route to the Fountain of the Peach Blossom Spring is based on an ancient tale. The scenery along the road is extremely beautiful, but the destination is devoid of flowers.

"I appreciate its rhythm, like listening to music," Hu says.



Hope for indie comics

"I like what the artist Zhang Xun wrote in the intro. He said, 'We don't know whether we are facing the future or the end after this book is published. However, I like both possibilities,'" Hu says.

Unlike the common commercial comic books by Japanese masters that first enchanted their readers in primary school, the stories in SC are much more abstract and in a variety of styles. Some even resemble wood block prints. Stories are short and rendered in black and white.

These comics appeal to the minority. Press houses the editors contacted were not willing to publish the book despite their interest. A 640-page book is a big risk in small market.

The editors knew it. But they still covered the 40,000 yuan printing cost out of pocket.

Xie Peng, another editor, moved to Shanghai from Beijing to teach at a local college. The 33-year-old artist started drawing comics during his fifth year of primary school. At that time, classics like Akira Toriyama's *Dragon Ball* and Masami Kurumada's *Saint Seiya* had not been imported. His first comic was DC's Batman, which artistically led him on to explore Japanese pop comics and European artists.

He describes comics as a vessel for the artist's personal ideas and emotion.

"From the first episode to the third, the readers grew with us. We are hoping to attract new readers from the college crowd. Many of them are open to all kinds of art, and they can spread it to more people. But the price (128 yuan) of SC3 is high, and we're worried it might discourage students. I think the artists deserve to be heard," Xie says.



二十三



二十四



Talented, but immature

It has been almost two months since SC3 was released, and hundreds of copies have been sold online. On January 31, the book's third signing event will be held at Shanghai Zheng Da Art Gallery.

"We are still an inexperienced team. It is not just that making the book is a part-time job. From the arrangement to promotion, there is a lot we are still learning how to do," Hu says.

The young artists should be learning too.

Picasso's paintings are shapeless, abstract. The seemingly random touches of the brush could have been done by any untrained painter—yet his style is hard to copy. Few know that the paintings from his teenage years show his mastery of the techniques of his predecessors.

So it should be in any scene. But the young artists contributing to the SC series lack professional experience.

"I have to admit that their works are immature. They have no professional training in how to draw or tell a story. But on the other hand, since we're not making this series for professional artists, great technical skill is the last thing I would expect. Comics are a language you learn through practice, but original ideas are crucial for the scene," Hu says.

"Every year there are over 400,000 graduates from the comic and animation departments of colleges. Most are not creative and know nothing about the scene. We don't lack skilled professionals: we lack people who have something to express," Xie says.

SC4 and SC5 will be smaller, the editors hope. Money for the future books will depend on sales of SC3.

"If an artist has 10,000 readers then he can make a living from his works. I can't say that people selected for SC will be making money. We're just trying to keep it alive," Hu says.

Sweet gift inspirations

Do-it-yourself cakes and desserts



Young Chinese are becoming more interested in baking.

Photo provided by Tianmimi

Spreading sunshine through cream cakes

Tianmimi, located downtown, is tucked in an office building in the central business district (CBD). In the middle of the bakery stand four long work tables arranged in a square. On the walls are dozens of photos of its customers.

Tianmimi does not do retail; it concentrates on providing DIY courses, a rarity among Beijing bakeries. For 178 yuan, people can learn the A to Z of creating a cream cake.

Su Tao, the manager, considers her business a "love," rather than hopping on a business bandwagon. Before opening Tianmimi with her best friend, Su never gave baking a thought. She fell in love with cream cakes after her friend brought her to a DIY bakery in the hopes the activity might help her recover after

her divorce.

Su now wants to share this grace with others. "I want to help more people overcome their negative moods through baking their own sweet and cute cakes," she said.

House specialty: Japanese green tea cream cake with mixed fruit, a red-bean middle layer and chocolate topping (178 yuan for six inches, 208 yuan for eight inches)

Tianmimi

Where: Room 115, Tower E, Yangguang 100, 2 Guanghua Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 9 am - 10 pm

Tel: 13810881010, 13521192676

Cost: 138-218 yuan per cake

Web: 100cake.com

The dessert specialist



Brownies made by Maya's students

Photo provided by Maya

If you don't look carefully enough, you might miss MAYA. The bakery is located in an apartment building near the Pingguo residential area in Chaoyang District, with only a simple sign hanging on the door. But once inside, you'll be surrounded by colorful baking equipment, the smell of goodies and the sound of soothing music.

Here you can learn to make all sorts of desserts: gingerbread men,

gift-box-shaped milk cakes, banana bread - even moon cakes.

The most popular dessert at MAYA is matcha two-color biscuits, which you can mold into various shapes and sizes.

To join a class, book at least two days in advance and tell the staff what you want to make. It costs 198 yuan to learn how to make one dessert. The staff will prepare all the ingredients and materials.

House specialty: Truffle chocolate, a set of nine truffle chocolate pieces containing Belgian baking chocolate, blended fresh cream, rum and fine cocoa powder (128 yuan)

Maya

Where: Room 3-709, Building 6, Landgent-Holi Apartments, Baizhiwan Nan Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 9 am - 8 pm

Tel: 8772 5737, 13811457305

Cost: 50-190 yuan for one type of dessert

Web: maya-cake.com.cn

By Chu Meng

As Spring Festival approaches - a season for family reunions - people are scrambling to buy the "right gift" for family members. Most people default on a bottle of wine and a cake. The presents can be infinitely more creative and sweet if you bake them yourself.

Those who are clueless about baking need not worry: there are a number of do-it-yourself (DIY) bakeries around town. All you have to do is decide what you want to make, follow the teacher's instructions and wait for your creation to come together. An added benefit is that you don't have to clean up the mess afterwards.



Cheesecake made by Meizhizhi's students

Photo provided by Meizhizhi

The house of cheesecake

Meizhizhi Cake House specializes in Philadelphia cream cheesecake and is the most popular DIY cheesecake house among office workers.

The bakery, located in the Wudaokou university area, has a small classroom that can fit a maximum of 10 students. But this makes for learning in a warm and friendly atmosphere.

"Nowadays few people want to waste time choosing a gift. Baking a cake adds a personal touch to your gift and closes the gap between people," said Miranda Zhao, who runs the bakery with her mother.

For people wanting to make an easy,

no-bake cheesecake, Zhao has a fool-proof recipe that requires only three steps. First, make the Graham cracker crust, which needs to be extra thick and high. Next, make the creamy Jello filling. Last, swirl whipped cream on top. Voila!

House specialty: Marble cheesecake glazed with melted chocolate (178 yuan for six inches, 218 yuan for eight inches)

Meizhizhi Cake House

Where: Room 807C, Huaqing Jia-yuan, Wudaokou, Haidian District

Open: Daily except Monday, 2-8 pm

Tel: 8286 4550; 13910980615

Cost: 168-228 yuan per cake

Web: 51diycake.com

Where to buy baking equipment online

Cake Princess Bakery

This is a popular shop among Chinese bakers. It sells not only baking equipment but also baking ingredients such as ice cream powder, coconut crumbs, Anchor butter and sushi rollers.

Website:

shop33610415.taobao.com



Cake cups cost starting from 6 yuan each

Photo provided by Baidu.com

The Home of Yaoyao's Mom

This store was established by a full-time housewife, who prefers to be called as Yaoyaoma. She named it after her daughter, who hated vegetables and fruits from age 1. The mother tried to find creative ways to make the child eat healthier, and so began baking cakes with fruits and vegetables. The mother has since become one of the most popular baking teachers online.

Website: shop3451.taobao.com

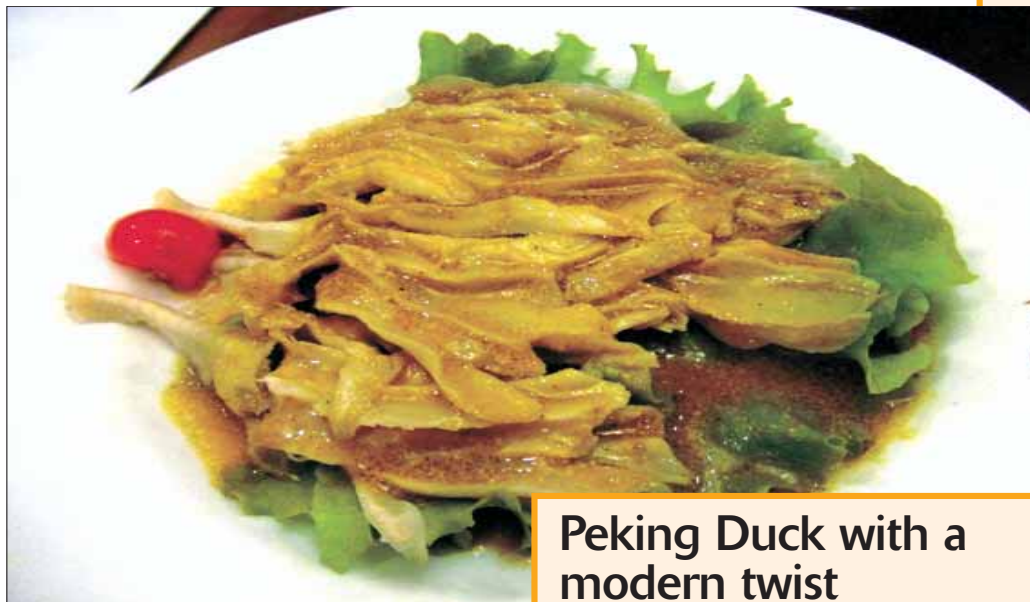
Pig's Nose

Besides Western baking equipment, the shop also sells all kinds of cooking seasonings and imported ingredients. It has everything, from Southeastern Asian coconut milk to Italian balsamic vinegar and South Korean bean paste.

Website: jiayouzhubi.taobao.com

Winter is for warm, nutritious food

Traditional Chinese medical theory suggests indulging in warm, nutritious food in winter. Peking Duck is especially recommended after winter solstice, which occurred on December 22. Hot pot and dishes that are not overly spicy are also good choices.



Mixed duck claw with mustard, 30 yuan

Fresh and light seafood hot pot

By Annie Wei

The broth can make or break your hot pot. Xianggangxiang Seafood Hot Pot has raised hot pot broth-making to an art: it offers various types of broth rarely found in other restaurants. For instance, its mushroom broth (68 yuan) is made using more than a dozen kinds of mushrooms.

We recommend hot pot broth with Yangtze River catfish (108 yuan per 500 grams of fish). The fish was fresh and tender and added bite to the broth.

There is also broth with fish head, broth with chicken and chicken and pig's feet broth

— all 68 yuan. If you want a simple soup, try pigeon herb soup (88 yuan).

For your hot pot's main ingredients, what else do you order but seafood? Xianggangxiang's seafood is always fresh and well prepared. Try its seafood combination (98 yuan), fresh shrimp balls (38 yuan), minced shrimps (48 yuan), minced cattle fish (48 yuan) or cuttlefish balls (38 yuan for 8 balls). Then throw in some vegetables; most cost 10 yuan per order.

Carbohydrate addicts should try the sesame shaobing (10 yuan for five pieces) or udon noodle (10 yuan).

For drinks on a cold winter night, nothing beats hot corn juice or hot yam juice, both 58 yuan per mug. The juices are made from pure corn and yam, with no added sugar. If you prefer a cold drink, try the chef's specials: icy hello tea (22 yuan) or plum juice (22 yuan). One of the most popular beverages is water chestnut juice (22 yuan), which is light and refreshing. Fresh fruit or vegetable juices are also available at 15 yuan a glass.

Xianggangxiang Seafood Hot Pot Restaurant

Where: 38 Haoyun Jie, Chaoyang District

Open: 11 am – 11 pm

Tel: 5867 0260

Cost: About 100 yuan per person

Peking Duck with a modern twist



Roasted duck skin in a set meal, 168 yuan

Photos by Huang Xiao

By Annie Wei

Quanjud, Dadong, Bianyifang, Xiangmanlou, Lique... these are the biggest names in Peking Duck, each with its own specialty.

Yawang, or Duck King, established a decade ago, is known for its innovative recipes and modern flavors. It only uses ducks from Scotland, known for its fat breeds.

The restaurant's original roast duck costs 128 yuan, with an additional three yuan for condiments and 12 yuan for half a kilo of wraps. Once the meat has been carved off the duck, you can choose one of four ways to cook the bones: fried in salt and pepper, fried with ketchup or chili peppers, braised with green vegetables and tofu, or braised with pepper and vegetables. Add another 10 yuan for this. Duck soup costs 10 yuan for a big bowl, 5 yuan for small one.

The duck skin and meat are served separately. Try eating a piece of skin plain; it almost melts in your mouth. Well roasted duck meat is tender, not dry or oily.

Peking Duck goes well with Sichuan or Shandong food. Yawang opted for a pairing with light-flavored Cantonese cuisine, which its patrons love. Try cold dishes like mixed duck feet with mustard (30 yuan) or spiced beef (26 yuan). Pepper wings piece (28 yuan) is a popular item.

For hot dishes, go for fried duck soft with vegetables (58 yuan); duck soft is the fatty layer between the skin and the meat. It is fried with pine nuts and eaten sandwiched between lettuce leaves. The fresh, raw vegetable helps temper the dish's oiliness.

There is also fried duck three whites (48 yuan), which consists of liver, tongue and feet. If you want the fowl's more "exotic" parts, try fried duck tongue with pepper (68 yuan).

For a group of four, we recommend the set meal three flavors one duck (268 yuan). It consists of roast duck skin and meat, Fried duck soft with vegetables, wraps, duck soup and condiments.

Yawang

Where: West side of Xindadu Hotel, 21 Chegongzhuang Lu, Xicheng District

Open: 10:30 am – 2 pm and 5:30-9:30 pm

Tel: 6833 8693

Cost: About 100 yuan per person

Creative, poetic Hunan cuisine

By Annie Wei

Hunan food is known as the hottest in Chinese cuisine. A restaurant near Tuanjiehu Park, Weizhichu, has made a name for its creative take on this tongue scorching.

The snobbish types might call its interior decoration "trying hard to be classy": a wood-framed glass entrance, low black-and-red tables on tatami mats, thin silk curtains separating the tables and transparent flooring with a pool of gold fish underneath. Through the door is a small courtyard.

But no matter what your opinion is on the decor, you're in for a good meal.

The menu is all in Chinese, but the field is leveled by the poetic yet indecipherable dish names. The best recourse is to consult with the wait staff, who are friendly and attentive. Gese guniang ("all kinds of girls," 18 yuan) contains various types of mushrooms. The mushrooms may have been a bit salty but they were really fresh.

Weichu dabancai (18 yuan) is a big serving of salad sprinkled with cashew and pine nuts.

For hot dishes, try suanjiao liu niurou (45 yuan), tender beef sautéed in garlic and pepper. It had a rich flavor and a spicy edge.

Fuguiyu (68 yuan) is better known as "shuizhuyu," fish in boiling oil with a mountain of chili peppers. The fresh fish is covered and cooked with bean sprouts, chopped pepper and spring onion.

The restaurant offers an 18-percent discount during lunch hours – an ideal time to try it out if you detest noisy crowds. It is hopping at night, drawing diners from all around the city.

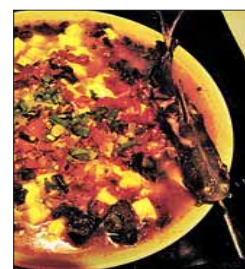
Weizhichu

Where: Jia 7, Beisantiao, Tuanjiehu, Chaoyang District

Open: 11am – 10 pm

Tel: 8596 3599

Cost: About 50 yuan per person



Fish with tofu, 48 yuan

Photo by Yu Tingmei



The restaurant's special beef plate, 48 yuan

Photo by Huang Xiao

Meeting Mr. Brightside



By Wang Yu

While everyone is talking about the star-studded concert Show of Peace happening in April at the Bird's Nest, something more immediate is rocking Beijing: The Killers, an alternative rock band that has sold 14 million albums since its 2004 debut, including *Rolling Stone's* pick for album of the year in 2008.

The band's story begins in Las Vegas where its lead singer Brandon Flowers was abandoned by his former synth-pop group Blush Response. He refused to move with them to Los Angeles where the music scene was much bigger.

Flowers met guitarist David Keuning in 2002 after responding to his newspaper ad looking for a singer. Flowers got excited about the mention of Oasis as an influence. The two approached Ronnie Vannucci, Jr. and Mark Stoermer about forming The Killers, a name that came from the bass drum of a fictional band in the music video of New Order's "Crystal."

Next Tuesday's concert may be The Killers' debut performance in China, but it already created a connection here years ago. The cover photo of its first album *Hot Fuss* (2004) was shot outside a residential community in China, but the musicians can't remember the location. You bet the human search engine is scrambling to uncover the mystery.

Hot Fuss is every band's

dream debut album: it produced the chart-topping singles "All These Things that I've Done" and "Mr. Brightside," which broke through the UK Top 10. Bigger success came with its re-release of "Somebody Told Me," which landed on No. 3 in the UK charts.

The songs spread rapidly on the Chinese Web and helped the band build a solid fan base. The Killers' music exhibits the defining elements of British rock, such as a foundation of guitar riffs, beautiful bass lines and synthesized sounds borrowed from disco music. No wonder listeners mistook it for a British group.

The band's next two albums, *Sam's Town* (2006) and *Day & Age* (2008), were not as brilliant as their first, but they were still admirable records. Flowers, who has a reputation for overconfidence, has said The Killers aims to be the next U2.

The band has staged more than 40 shows since their exhausting world tour kicked off last September. For its Beijing show, new props have been created, including fake coconut trees, to generate a blast of heat in winter.

The Killers Beijing Live Concert 2010

Where: Workers' Gymnasium, Gongti Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

When: January 26, 8 pm
Admission: 380-780 yuan
Tel: 6501 6300, 6406

9999

5 Friday, January 22

Exhibition The World Through My Eyes — Ana Carlot Meirelles Photography Exhibition

Where: XYZ Gallery, 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until January 25, daily, 10 am – 6 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 8459 9299

Young Artists' Group Exhibition

Where: Cool Gallery, 3818 Warehouse, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until January 31, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 8456 6664

Nightlife

Dead Wasps

Where: Mao Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 9 pm
Admission: 70 yuan
Tel: 6402 5080

Movie

Shanghai, les années folles (The Crazy Years)

Where: Broadway Cine-

matheque, 2/F Building 4, North section of Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), 1 Xiangheyuan Lu, Dongcheng District
When: 7:30 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 8438 8258 ext. 8008



Mon Oncle (My Uncle)

Where: Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 7 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 8459 9269

6 Saturday, January 23

Exhibition Daffodil Sculpture

Where: Dandel Art Space, Beijing Image

Base, Building 1, 3 Guangqu Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 10 am – noon
Admission: 20 yuan
Tel: 6770 8966

Tan Ping's New Etchings

Where: Yun Gallery, 3818 Warehouse, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: January 23 – March 23, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 8459 9329

Movie

Les Glaneurs et la Glaneuse (The Gleaners and I)

Where: Lady Book Saloon, 69 Chengfu Lu, Haidian District
When: 7 pm
Admission: free
Tel: 6270 1928

Pharmacy No. 1

Where: Broadway Cinematheque, 2/F Building 4, North section of Museum of Modern

Art (MOMA), 1 Xiangheyuan Lu, Dongcheng District
When: 3 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 8438 8258 ext. 8008

The Wind that Shakes the Barley

Where: Lele Bar (50 meters east of Communication University of China's north gate), Dingfuzhuang, Chaoyang Lu, Chaoyang District
When: 7 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 6576 5987

Nightlife

We Funk

Where: Mao Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: 8:30-11 pm
Admission: 50 yuan advance purchase, 60 yuan for students
Tel: 6402 5080

Everset Beijing Concert

Where: The One, 718 bus station, Gaobeidian, Chaoyang District
When: 8 pm
Admission: 150 yuan, 260 yuan, 480 yuan
Tel: 400 898 8383

Upcoming

Nightlife Bemused

Where: Weibozhiyan Club, 3/F North Building, SOHO Shangdu, 8 Dongdaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District
When: January 22, 9 pm
Admission: 30 yuan advance purchase, 40 yuan at the door
Tel: 5900 0969

Stage in September

Concert

New Year's Ode to Joy – Song Fei Erhu Recital

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District
When: February 2, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-580 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Lü Sijing Violin Recital

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District
When: February 26, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-500 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Dance

Sound of Yunnan

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: February 3-5, 7:30 pm
Admission: 180-1,280 yuan
Tel: 6551 8058

Lar Lubovitch Dance Company China Premiere – Mixed Bill I

Where: Theater of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District
When: February 3-6, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-580 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

The Lady of the Camellias Ballet

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District
When: February 3-8, 7:30 pm
Admission: 180-1,080 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Irish Tap Dance Riverdance Beijing Tour 2010

Where: Exhibition Theater, 135 Xizhimen Wai Dajie, Xicheng District
When: February 5-11, 7:30 pm
Admission: 180-2,000 yuan
Tel: 6831 6633

Celtic Legends – Irish Tap Dance

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: February 6-8, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-880 yuan
Tel: 6551 8058

Sleeping Beauty, Nutcracker and Swan Lake by the Russian National Ballet Theater

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: February 16-20, 7:30 pm
Admission: 50-1,000 yuan
Tel: 6551 8058

(By Jackie Zhang)

Sunday, January 24

Exhibition Ne Travaillez Jamais (Don't Ever Work)



Where: Tang Contemporary Art Gallery, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu,

Chaoyang District
When: Until March 28, daily except Monday, 11 am – 6:30 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 5978 9610

Nightlife

Great Get-together – Chen Lei and Friends

Where: The Star Live, 3/F, 79 Hepingli Xi Jie, Dongcheng District
When: 8 pm
Admission: 20 yuan advance purchase, 25 yuan at the door
Tel: 6425 5677

Ballerina Who Loves B-boy

Where: Century Theater, 40 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District
When: Until January 29, daily, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-880 yuan
Tel: 6468 6708

Saasin

Where: Mao Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: 8 pm
Admission: 180 yuan advance purchase, 240 yuan at the door
Tel: 6215 9844

Movie



In Love We Trust

Where: Yugongyishan, 3-2 Zhangzizhong Lu, Dongcheng District
When: 8 pm
Admission: 40 yuan, 30 yuan for students
Tel: 8402 8477
(By Liang Meilan)

Unnecessary C-sections risky for mother and baby

By Han Manman

Childbirth is a pain only a woman will ever know. But these days, fewer women are experiencing it since they opt for a Cesarean section (C-section).

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports C-section numbers are up across the world, with almost 50 percent of Chinese children being birthed under a knife. But the C-section is still a major surgery, and the WHO warns that its unnecessary use may jeopardize women's health.



CFP Photo

C-sections most frequent in China

Almost half of all births in China are C-sections, representing the world's highest rate for the procedure, according to a WHO study published last week. It declares that the rate of C-sections has reached "epidemic proportions" in many countries: 36 percent in Vietnam and 34 percent in Thailand.

The study reviewed almost 110,000 births in nine Asian countries in 2007 and 2008. In China, 46 percent of these births were C-sections: one quarter were not medically necessary.

The reasons for women electing to have a C-section varied between regions, but the frequency of the procedure seems related to patients' wealth and access to improved medical facilities, the study concluded.

In China, women opt for the surgery to choose an auspicious birthday for their child. Some fear painful natural births or worry their vaginas may be stretched or damaged by a normal delivery. A few women said they mistakenly believed it is less risky, said Zhang Weiyuan, a doctor from Beijing Obstetrics and Gynecology Hospital.

Potential risks

"The relative safety of the operation leads people to think it's as safe as vaginal birth. However, we found that women who have unnecessary C-sections put themselves and their babies at risk," Metin Gulmezoglu, a WHO official who co-authored the report, said.

The surgery may injure adjacent organs — bowel, bladder or blood vessels of the mother, Zhang said. There is also an increased risk of infection and of blood clots in the legs, which may break away to cause a pulmonary embolism. C-sections result in re-hospitalization twice as often as vaginal delivery.

The surgery slices through the skin, tissue and uterine wall to extract the baby and the placenta, and then sews up the incision. The recovery period will be at least four weeks: vaginal delivery's recovery time is as few as four days.

The studies found that C-section babies have a higher risk of developing respiratory diseases and often require resuscitation or subsequent admissions to a special-care nursery.

"Surgical delivery should only be used when complications develop during birth that put the mother or baby's life at risk," Zhang said.

"It is not easy to compare a C-section to a normal delivery, because there are numerous factors that must be taken into consideration," Zhang said. "Every pregnant woman wants a healthy baby, so it is important to talk to your obstetrician to understand the options. The better informed you are, the safer the delivery will be."

Who needs a C-section?

1. Overweight mothers. Pregnant women with a body mass index of 30 or more likely need a C-section. Almost 35 percent of the women above the age of 20 today fit this category.

Doctors say fat women tend to have fat babies, making it difficult to push them out normally. The excess tissue can prevent the baby from moving smoothly through the birth canal. Overweight women usually have other associated problems, like high blood pressure, which might result in premature labor and the need for a C-section.

2. Older mothers. Women having children late in life face a more difficult labor and delivery. They also have a harder time pushing the baby out. Many older women use fertility treatments to get pregnant and have twins or triplets.

3. Multiple children. When two or more children are ready to be born too early, or are positioned in the uterus in a way that may complicate delivery, a C-section may be needed.

4. Stalled labor. According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, one third of C-section births are performed because labor halts. The contractions may not be strong enough to open the cervix for the baby.

5. Placenta problems. There are two placental problems that may require a C-section: placenta previa, where the placenta covers the cervix, and placental abruption, where the placenta separates from the uterine wall depriving the baby of oxygen.

6. Past C-section. A previous cesarean birth is one of the biggest reasons women today have C-sections.

7. Abnormal pelvis. A previous injury or condition may make vaginal birth impossible.

8. Severe illness. Diabetes, herpes, heart problems or ovarian cysts may make normal delivery risky for the baby.

9. Head size or position. If the baby's head is too large to fit through the vaginal canal or if it enters the birth canal feet first, a C-section may be the only way to save the mother and child.

10. Medical condition like spina bifida. Birth defects like spina bifida affect the backbone and spinal cord of the child, making a C-section delivery safer.

Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory in Beijing

By Chu Meng

The World Chocolate Wonderland, inspired by Roald Dahl's popular children's book *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, opens its doors next Friday and stays open through April 20. It will be China's first chocolate theme park, located on the north side of the Bird's Nest.

The mouthwatering exhibitions are divided into five halls: World's Candy Hall, World's Chocolate Hall, Sweet Experience Hall, Sweet Gift Hall and Wonderland Theme Hall. There are also two outdoor activity areas, Sweet Stages and Sweet Shopping Street, where you can indulge your cravings. This is an attraction that definitely makes life sweeter.



A replica of the Mogao Grottoes in Dunhuang



Chocolate Terracotta Warriors and horse-drawn chariots



The Great Chocolate Wall



A chocolate buddha included in the Mogao Grottoes exhibit

Wonderland Theme Hall

This is an exhibition that brings together some of China's cultural treasures: The Great Wall, the Mogao Grottoes, the Terracotta Warriors, the painting Panorama Along the Upper River During Qingming Festival and Ming-Dynasty porcelain cups. The biggest difference between the originals and these imitations, some of them life-size, is that they're made entirely of sweets.

The 12-by-1-by-2-meter replica of the Great Wall contains chocolate bricks glued together by white powdered sugar. At the foot of the wall are more chocolate bricks, lying scattered. Anyone could mistake them for the real construction material – if not for their thick chocolaty scent. Warning: refrain from picking up a brick and taking a bite out of it.

Wang Sen, a chocolate master from Jiangsu Province who heads the theme park's builders, said that 8 tons of materials were shipped from Switzerland, Germany and Belgium. "Only imported cocoa powder and chocolate can meet the purity requirements of chocolate sculptures. It's really a pity we cannot manufacture them ourselves," he said, adding that his team "adopted a special formula to ensure the bricks' rigidity."

The Terracotta Warriors consist of 560 soldier pieces arranged in columns on a 30-square-meter platform. Each has a distinct facial expression and pose; some are holding weapons while others are driving horse-drawn chariots. Each "warrior" stands as high as a beer bottle and weighs 1 kilogram.

Wang said it took workers five days on average to complete one sculpture; the entire collection took five months to finish. "The ingredients used for the Terracotta Warriors were different from the Great Wall's. The chocolate needed to be soft enough to be carved after it was molded, but the technical standards were very hard to follow. If it became too soft, it easily melted in carvers' hands," he said. Workers also had to wear masks to prevent vapor from their breath from melting the chocolate soldiers.

World's Chocolate Hall

This hall, with an entrance straight out of a tale fairy, contains the world's first chocolate waterfall creating a 1-ton pool of hot chocolate syrup. The spicy concoction is made with Indian devil pepper, which gives chocolate a greenish hue.

Around it are cigars, US dollar bills, a chess set – even women's underwear – created using chocolate.

Continued on page 21...



Lines of chocolate Terracotta Warriors

Photo by Che Liang



Ming-Dynasty porcelain bottles in chocolate flavor

Photos by Zhang Ying

... continued from page 20

The fairy-tale-themed entrance to World's Chocolate Hall



One of the hall's biggest attractions is the World Chocolate Culture section, a possible instrument to achieving world unity and understanding. Its "culture wall" shows how the ancient Mayans' cocoa plants became an essential component of modern living.

The Mayans established the earliest-known cocoa plantations in Central America's Yucatan Peninsula. In 1544, Dominican friars brought a group of Mayan nobles to see Prince Philip of Spain; the Mayans brought jars of cocoa beverages as gifts. Decades later the Spaniards began adding cane sugar and flavor-

ings such as vanilla to their cocoa drinks, producing hot chocolate.

The French and English made the first chocolate bars in the mid-17th century. They were popularized through chocolate emporiums, which sold rolls and cakes with solid chocolate.

John Hanan, an Irishman, and James Baker, an American, introduced the mass production of chocolate. In 1765 the pair built the first chocolate mill, which eventually produced the famous Baker's brand of chocolate.

According to the No. 1 Historic File Museum of China,

chocolate was first brought to China in the Qing Dynasty, the 44th year of the Kangxi Emperor. A missionary from Rome said he brought Kangxi 150 bars of chocolate as medicine. Instructions said it had to be eaten with sugar and hot water.

Olympic Green's new look, flavor, scent

The World Chocolate Wonderland is part of Beijing's plan to promote a "culture Olympics," said Su Yan, a spokeswoman for the Olympic Green Organizing Committee. "You can see diverse cultural activities brought to

China and the Olympic Green," she said, adding that they expect 10,000 to 20,000 people to visit the theme park every day.

After studying trends in the domestic market, the municipal government decided to introduce a chocolate theme park. "There is a huge potential for the chocolate market in China ... that's why many foreign chocolate producers are vying to joining our project," said Tina Cheng, general manager of Beijing Artsource Planning Company, the park's operator.



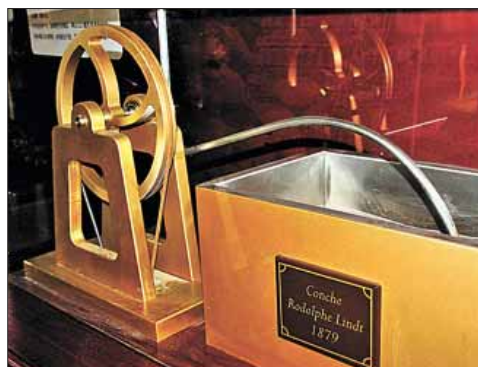
Chocolate master Wang Sen carves a part of the Terracotta Warriors' chariot.

Photos by Zhang Ying

The "German chocolate history" area of the World Chocolate Culture section



A candy pixie in the World's Candy Hall



A chocolate grinding machine from Belgium

World Chocolate Wonderland

Where: 200 meters east of the Bird's Nest, Olympic Green, Chaoyang District

When: January 29 - April 20, Monday to Friday 9 am - 5:30 pm, weekends 9 am - 7:30 pm

Ticket: 60 yuan for the elderly and children under 12 years; children need to be accompanied by an adult, 80 yuan for adults, 160 yuan for two tickets with a gift

How to get there: Take Subway Line 8 and get off at the Olympic Green station, then take Exit E.

Note: Child nutrition experts are concerned about the growing number of obese children, so evaluate whether bringing your child to the theme park is a wise idea.

Product

Bella Skincare

Bella, a skin care service for Asian women, has a range of natural moisturizers to soothe and nourish dry, dehydrated skin. After repeated use, the complexion becomes fresh and radiant, and the skin firmer and more elastic. Added hyaluronic acid allows its Hydra Quench Cream to deeply hydrate and regenerate dry skin and reduce moisture loss. Concentrated Vitamin E penetrates deep to smooth out fine lines. Anti-aging molecules help prevent the signs of aging before they appear; lines and wrinkles are diminished to protect your youthful image.

For more information, call 400 610 9619 or visit bellaskin.com.cn.



Hotel

Shangri-La in T+L 50's top 50

Fourteen Shangri-La hotels and resorts were voted by readers of *Travel + Leisure* the 2010 T+L 500. The Island Shangri-La, Hong Kong and Pudong Shangri-La, Shanghai placed among the top 50 hotels in the world. Readers of *Condé Nast Traveler* US edition voted five Shangri-La luxury hotels onto its 2010 Gold List. Both lists were announced this month.

Dining

Valentine's Day dinner buffet

Treat your loved one to something special at this seductive Valentine's Day dinner buffet. Feast on the finest aphrodisiacs, from the freshest seafood to mouth-watering premium cuts and exquisitely prepared regional Asian dishes. Satisfy your sweetheart's sweet tooth with delectable miniature desserts and sweets.

Where: Elements, Hilton Beijing, 1 Dongfang Lu, Chaoyang District

When: February 14

Cost: 288 yuan per person with a dish of caviar and a glass of complimentary sparkling wine; small cakes available at 100 yuan each for couples (reserve 24 hours in advance); subject to 15 percent surcharge

Tel: 5865 5020



Overflowing love

Come for the French wine, international beer, soft drinks and juice bar. Immerse yourself in an array of seafood, homemade pastries and exquisite dishes from all over the world. There are so many enticing ways to tell her "Je t'aime."

Where: VIC restaurant, Sofitel Wanda Beijing, 93 Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District

When: February 14

Cost: 888 yuan dinner buffet for two

Tel: 8599 6666



North Atlantic Canadian lobster

Enjoy delicious North Atlantic Canadian lobster. The grilled and fresh Bire cheese gratin lobster with Australian beef, recommended by Executive Chef Hans Gorsler, will guarantee a lavish feast for your eyes and tastebuds.

Where: French Bistro, The Great Wall Sheraton Hotel Beijing, 10 Dongsanhuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

When: February 1-28

Tel: 6590 5566 ext. 2119

100% prosperity

Three rice cake packages are available with fish, turnip, gold coin or gold ingot-shaped rice cakes.

Gift basket options this year follow a healthy theme. The "Healthy Option" hamper in a red and gold fabric-lined wooden box contains rice cakes, Penfolds red

wine, a Chinese knot and tiger toy, pistachio nuts, ginseng, herbal tonics made from starfish, star horse, barley, lily bulb, pork rib and various herbs. "The Organic Pick" comes with organic rice, millet, red beans, green beans, camellia oil and other organic goodness. The rest of the range is equally enticing.

Where: Shangri-La's Kerry Centre, 1 Guanghua Lu, Chaoyang District

Tel: 65618833 ext. 41



New Year of the tiger

As Chinese New Year approaches, the Crowne Plaza Beijing Zhongguancun is wishing fortune, health and happiness for its guest and friends with three traditional New Years set menus.

The sets range from exciting Chinese New Year packages to elegant private party dinners. It's a great chance to enjoy and unwind with families and friends.

Where: Rouge Restaurant, Crowne Plaza Beijing Zhongguancun, 106 Zhichun Lu, Haidian District

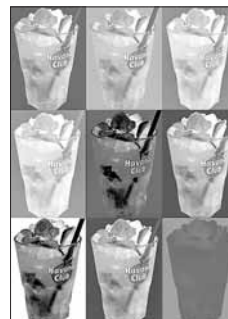
Tel: 5993 8888 ext. 2316 or 2317

Trentino Alto Adige

The cuisine of this northernmost Italian region has a German influence. Ingredients, spices and combinations unknown to the other regions are used. The basic element of Trentino cuisine is "polenta," an Italian version of cornbread that is prepared and enriched with local ingredients. From appetizers to desserts it is the perfect winter cuisine; heartwarming and satisfying with a glass of good red wine.

Where: The Regent Beijing, 99 Jinbao Jie, Dongcheng District

Tel: 8522 1999



Mojito Mania

Havana has a range of mojitos, done the Latin American way. Bestsellers include the Cuban breeze mojito, sunset mojito, mango vanilla mojito, cucumber mojito, raspberry mojito and the layered mojito freeze.

From 5:30 to 8:30 pm, seven magic mojitos are 30 yuan per glass (discount not applicable during Sunset Hour); during Sunset Hour from 5:30 to 8:30 pm, all drinks two for one.

Where: Havana, Grand Millennium Beijing, Fortune Plaza, 7 Dongsanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District

Tel: 6530 9383

Welcoming the Gold Tiger

Celebrate the most anticipated holiday, Spring Festival, surrounded by the blessings of families and friends. Enjoy delectable Chinese New Year cakes and beautifully packaged gift baskets from China World Hotel, Beijing.

Choose from dragon fish cakes, sesame balls and an assortment of dumplings stuffed with lotus, red bean or sesame paste, or a dazzling selection of Chinese New Year gift sets and Spring Festival gift baskets.

Where: China World Hotel, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

Tel: 6505 2266 ext. 34

Aviation

More accolades for Singapore Airlines

Singapore Airlines came out on top last year as the favorite airline of business and leisure travelers in numerous international rankings, highlighting its continued focus on innovation and excellent service.

Its repeat awards come in categories such as in-flight entertainment, food and beverages, ground services, safety and management. The awards reflect the airline's efforts to keep pace with customers' changing tastes.

(By Sun Feng)



Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Wang Yu at wangyu2008@ynet.com.

New terms and old things

By Zhao Hongyi

Inviting friends over to my house for a chat over beer is one of my little joys. My most frequent visitors are Johnson and Paul, my former high school classmates and best friends.

They came over last Friday and as usual, we talked about everything, from our wives to the most heated debates in Chinese society.

We got into the latest programs on China Central Television (CCTV), our favorite anchors and the network's most memorable guests.

"Hey, have you ever heard of the word 'cctvility'?" Paul asked Johnson and me. "It's a term that was probably coined by CCTV, meaning people, things or programs that are important, have a positive effect and stimulate enthusiasm."

"This reminds me ... 'zhujunization' is another new word I heard," Paul said.

Zhu Jun is a CCTV personality who hosts a talk show that regularly features movie industry professionals. During his one-hour program, he asks guests to talk about their best memories and the most glorious moments in their lives days.

With a smug smile, Paul said it's important to become examples of cctvility and zhujunization at work.

Johnson disagreed. He said he prefers to act like a "greenhorn" – a newcomer – since it makes life in the office easier. "No extra responsibilities from the boss," he said with a laugh.

"I still say do your work well and give a duck face to everyone in the office," Paul said.

"Duck face? Is that like cctvility and zhujunization too?" I said.

"It means a smiling face with an innocent expression!" Paul said.

We then launched into a comparison of the 1970s, 80s and 90s gener-



ation. All of us thought young adults today were creating more problems than they were solving.

"Young people are always like that," Johnson said. "Don't worry, the world will soon be their responsibility and they better learn to keep it in one piece."

I gave the two guys a bottle of wine each, and before they left reminded them, "Don't forget your thing."

They laughed at my English, saying it was better if I said "gifts." "Thing sounds like the body part with a reproductive purpose," Johnson said, clapping me in the back.

Blacklist

This is a column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then watch out for this page each week.

1. This is akin to look at a bunch of toddlers riding motorcycles.

Professor Zhu Shida (ZS): "Akin" is an adjective meaning alike; of the same kind; similar, usually used as a predicate. For instance, Most boys are akin in their love of sports. You can change "akin" into "similar" with the same meaning: Most boys are similar in their love of sports. It can also mean belonging to the same family, related by blood: Your cousins are akin to you. Here we have the phrase "akin to" followed by a noun. So, after the phrase "akin to," if we are to use a verb form, it must be in a gerund form. The right way to write the sentence should be: This is akin to looking at a bunch of toddlers riding motorcycles. It is almost similar to the usage of the phrase "amount to." We may well say: This virtually amounts to looking at a bunch of toddlers riding motorcycles.

Native speaker Steven Sandor (SS): Another escape would be to slash out some extra words and turn the simile into a metaphor: "This is a bunch of toddlers riding motorcycles." Metaphor is stronger. I truly hope this comparison was being used to describe finance industry CEOs.

2. We spread the words – some people were ecstatic, others skeptical, demanding to see the agency report.

ZS: In English, "word" takes on a number of meanings such as advice, promise, talk, command, order, speech and a maxim. When it means tidings, news and information, we usually use its singular form "word" and often without either the definite or indefinite article. For instance, No word has come from the battlefield. We received word of his death. He left word with my secretary that he would call again this afternoon. About 300 East Germans were propelled there by word from West German television. When it means "writing" or "printing," it may take a plural form. For instance, They have enough faith in the words of the leadership. So, with this sample, "word" should be in the singular, not the plural form: We spread the word – some people were ecstatic, others skeptical, demanding to see the agency report.

SS: As a general rule, it will always be spelled "word" unless you are talking about a specific, countable quantity. The word count of your paper is *n* words. Christ Tucker famously asked Jackie Chan in *Rush Hour*, "Do you understand the words that are coming out of my mouth?" Compare this with the abstract, "I've received word of their victory." Holy books also spread "the good word," despite that word actually being a great many words.

3. The review brings into serious question an ambitious goal in the heart of the strategy.

ZS: Here we shall discuss the usage of the phrase "in the heart of." It means innermost; middle; center. For instance, in the heart of the forest, the heart of the cabbage, the heart of a city, the heart of a story, the heart of a problem. We do have such phrase as "in good heart" (in good spirits, in good condition) and in one's heart of hearts (in one's deepest thoughts or feelings). Here "at" is used when the place or time is thought of as a point while "in" is used when the place or time is thought of as having boundaries. So, with the sample sentence, idiomatically, it should be "at the heart of": The review brings into serious question an ambitious goal at the heart of the strategy.

SS: When prepositions are in doubt, draw a picture. As the professor already said, "in" should be reserved for locations with specific boundaries. In this case, "at" is the correct word.

Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please send a picture of it to wangyu2008@ynet.com together with your name and address.

Shampoo the thing



By Tiffany Tan

There are some things I would rather not know or think about. Like whether people wash their pubic hair as they do the hair that the world sees. It is not even something I have read gynecologists discuss; females from an early age hear their mothers and doctors say, "wash from the front back," but nothing about shampooing and such.

In general you can say something in Chinese using fewer words than you would in English. Chinese tweets exhibited this edge during another,

more interconnected age. This sign is a case in reverse: for four Chinese characters, one English word would have been perfect. Shampoos.

The translator/writer tripped on *yongpin*, which can mean supplies, articles for daily use or things. It is amazing how the most harmless things can become sexually loaded and end up embarrassing us. I do not easily get flustered by such talk, but people "shampooing their thing" was honestly the last thing I wanted to visualize. Please change the supermarket sign!

Up in the Air (2009)



Movie of the week

In this financial crisis, the people losing their jobs are sad – but the ones doing the firing aren't much happier.

Up in the Air tells a story of the latter.

Director Jason Reitman, of past indie classics *Thank You for Smoking* and *Juno*, has crafted his most personal and most effective portrait to date. The movie stars George Clooney in the most intimate and beautiful performance of his career.

Based on a book, the movie is a moving and witty piece of cinema. The adaptation by Reitman and Sheldon Turner is socially important in today's day and age. Reitman's direction shows he is a force to be reckoned, worthy of Oscar consideration along with Turner.

Synopsis

Ryan Bingham's job is to fire people from their jobs. The anguish, hostility and despair of his clients has left him falsely compassionate, living out of a suitcase and loving every second of it.

When his boss hires the arrogant young Natalie, she develops a method of video conferencing that will allow termination without ever leaving the office – essentially threatening the existence Ryan so cherishes.

Determined to show the naive girl the error of her logic, Ryan takes her on one of his cross-country firing expeditions, but as she starts to realize the disheartening realities of her profession, he begins to see problems with his way of life.



Scene 1

(Ryan meets Alex, a woman who also travels a lot for business in a hotel bar. They start talking about car rental companies.)

Ryan (R): Are you satisfied with Maestro?

Alex (A): Yeah, I am.

R: A little stingy with their miles. I like Hertz.

A: No, Hertz keeps its vehicles too long. If a car has over 20,000 miles, I won't drive it.

R: Maestro doesn't instant checkout. I like the park-and-go (1).

A: Hertz doesn't guarantee navigation.

R: You don't seem like a girl who needs directions.

A: I hate asking for directions. That's why I get a nav.

R: That new outfit, Colonial, isn't bad.

A: Is that a joke?

R: Yes.

A: Their kiosk placement blows (2).

R: They never have available upgrades.

A: Basically, it's a fleet of shit boxes. I don't know how they're still in business.

R: I'm Ryan.

A: I'm Alex.

Scene 2

(Natalie, a new employee and Ryan's assistant has just broken up with her boyfriend. They run into Alex in a hotel.)

A: He broke up with you with a text message?

R: Kind of like firing someone over the Internet.

A: What a weaselly prick.

Natalie (N): But what does that make me? Someone who falls for a prick.

A: We all fall for them. Pricks are spontaneous, unpredictable and fun. Then we're surprised when they turn out to be pricks.

N: I followed him to Omaha.

R: You did?

N: I had a job waiting for me in San Francisco when he got an offer from ConAgra. He said we could start a life together. So I followed him.

R: To Nebraska?

N: I thought I'd be engaged by now ... No offense ...

R: None taken.

A: That's all right.

N: When I was 16, I thought by 23 I'd be married, maybe have a kid, corner office by day, entertaining at night. I was supposed to be driving a Grand Cherokee by now.

A: Life can underwhelm (3) you that way.

N: I mean, where did you think you'd be by um ...

A: It doesn't work that way.

R: At a certain point, you stop with the deadlines.

A: It can be counterproductive.

N: I don't want to say anything anti-feminist. I really appreciate all your generation did for me.

A: It was our pleasure.

R: Well done.

N: But sometimes it feels like, no matter how much success I have, it's not gonna matter until I find the right guy.

A: You really thought this guy was the one?

N: I could have made it work. He um ... he really fit the bill (4). You know?

R: The bill?

N: White collar, college grad. Loves dogs, likes funny movies. Six-foot-one, brown hair, kind eyes, works in finance but is outdoorsy ... you know, on the weekends. I always imagined he'd have a single syllable name like Matt or John ... or Dave. In a perfect world, he drives a 4Runner and the only thing he loves more than me is his golden lab. And a nice smile. What about you?

A: Let me think. Honestly, by the time you're 34, all the physical requirements just go out the window (5). Like you secretly pray that he'll be taller than you. Not an asshole would be nice. Someone who enjoys my company, comes from a good family. You don't think about that when you're younger. I don't know ... someone who wants kids. Likes kids. Wants kids. Healthy enough to play with his kids.

Please let him earn more money than I do. You might not understand that now, but believe me, you will one day. Otherwise that's a recipe for disaster. And hopefully some hair on his

Scene 3

(On the wedding day of Ryan's sister, the bridegroom is hesitant.)

R: Jim, it's ... marriage. It's one of the most beautiful things on the earth. It's what people aspire to.

Jim (J): You never got married.

R: That's true.

J: I mean, you never even tried.

R: Well, it's hard to define try.

J: I don't know, just you seem happier than all my married friends.

R: Look, Jim, I'm not going to lie to you. Marriage can be a pain in the ass. And you're right. This all is just stuff that leads to your eventual demise.

J: Yes.

R: And we're all on running clocks. And they can't be slowed down or paused. And ... we all end up in the same place.

J: Yeah.

R: There is no point.

J: There is no point. That's what I'm saying.

R: You know, er ... I'm not normally the guy you would talk to about stuff like this. If you think about it ... Your favorite memories, the most important moments in your life. Were you alone?

J: No, I guess not.

R: Come to think of it. Last night, the night before your wedding when all this shit is swirling around in your head, weren't you guys in separate bedrooms?

J: Yeah, Julie went back to the apartment and I was just by myself in the honeymoon suite.

R: Kinda lonely, huh?

J: Yes, it was pretty lonely.

R: Life's better with company.



head. But I mean even that's not a deal breaker these days. A nice smile. Yeah, a nice smile. Nice smile just might do it.

N: Wow, that was depressing. I should just date women.

A: Tried it. We're no picnic (6) ourselves.

N: I don't mind being married to my career. And I don't expect it to hold me in bed as I fall asleep. I just don't want to settle.

A: You're young. Right now you see settling as some sort of a failure.

N: It is ... by definition.

A: But by the time someone is right for you, it won't feel like settling. And the only person left to judge you will be the 23-year-old girl with a target on your back.

Vocabulary

1. **park-and-go:** instant checkout
2. **blow:** here it means "works badly"
3. **underwhelm:** failure to excite, stimulate or impress
4. **fit the bill:** meet the requirements
5. **go out the window:** discard
6. **no picnic:** difficult, no fun

(By Wang Yu)